




# Crown of Thorns

STORY & ART BY  
**Yoko Kamio** 2





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2

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High school student Nobara Fukami has seen strange things since she was a child, but it's a gift that has brought her a life of isolation. She nearly died when she was young, but her grandfather made a deal with a demon to save her. However, the deal keeping her alive is set to expire when she turns 18.

Just before her 16th birthday, Nobara is visited by a demon named Lucio. He demands Nobara filter negative human emotions through her own body to make the special orbs on which demons feed. While fulfilling this duty, Nobara finally finds someone who seems to truly understand her—the demon she serves. However, a demon of ruination named Lee also visits Nobara, telling her that Lucio is a “reject” and that she should ask him for his real name.

Meanwhile, after boasting, “I have a demon too,” Nobara's classmate Henmi suddenly collapses in front of her...



# いばらの 冠の 元

CROWN  
OF  
THORNS

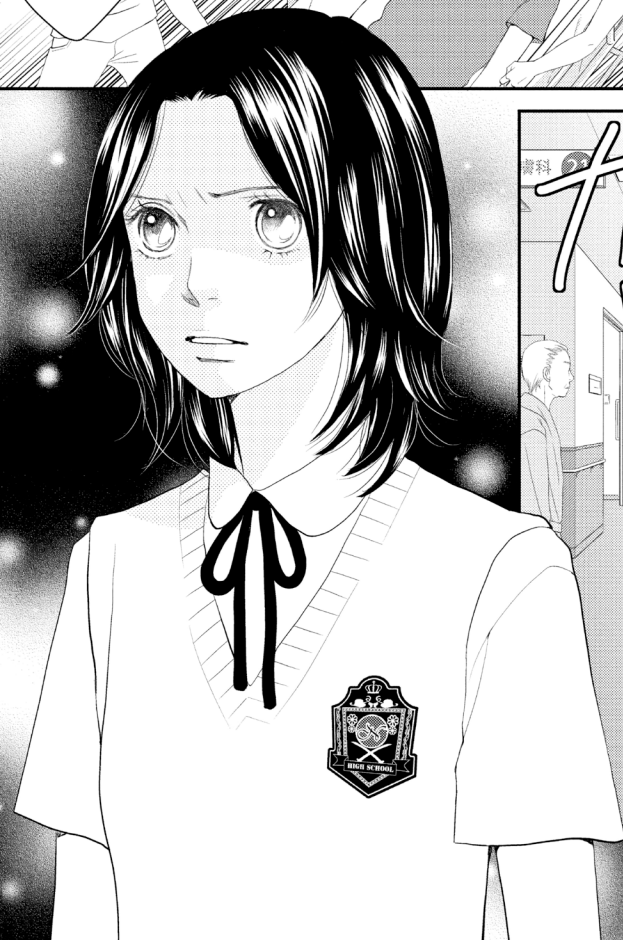
case  
7



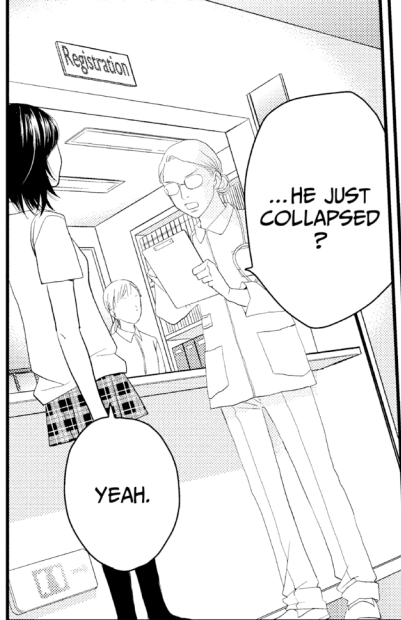












...HE JUST COLLAPSED ?

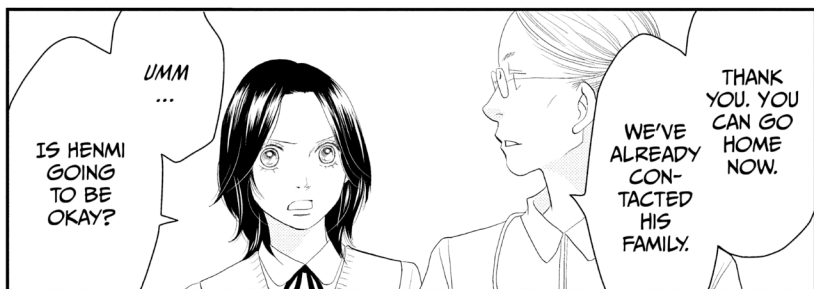
YEAH.



HE WAS TALKING, AND THEN SUDDENLY ...

...HE HAD TROUBLE CATCHING HIS BREATH.

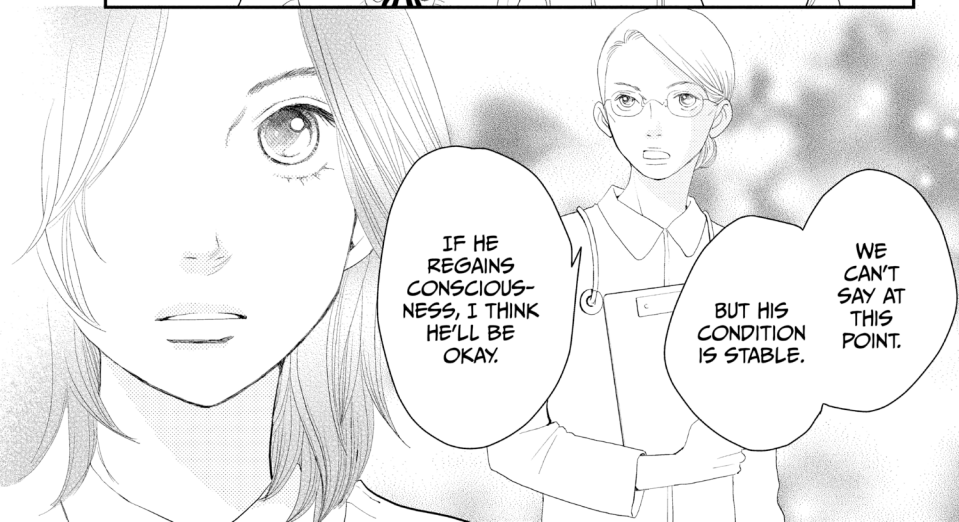
AND THEN...



UMM ...

IS HENMI GOING TO BE OKAY?

THANK YOU. YOU CAN GO HOME NOW. WE'VE ALREADY CONTACTED HIS FAMILY.

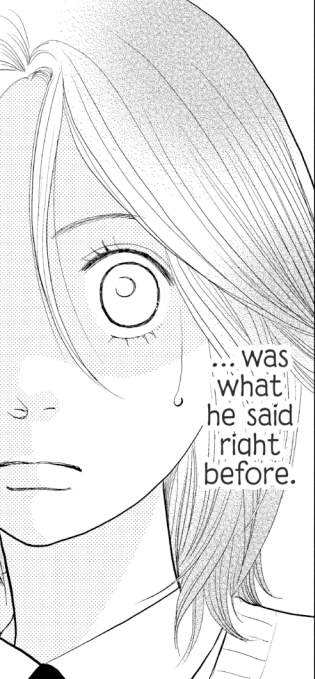


IF HE REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS, I THINK HE'LL BE OKAY.

BUT HIS CONDITION IS STABLE.

WE CAN'T SAY AT THIS POINT.





... was  
what  
he said  
right  
before.

I mean, I was  
surprised he  
collapsed like  
that...



But more  
shocking  
still...



It was  
such a  
shock.



The  
nerve!

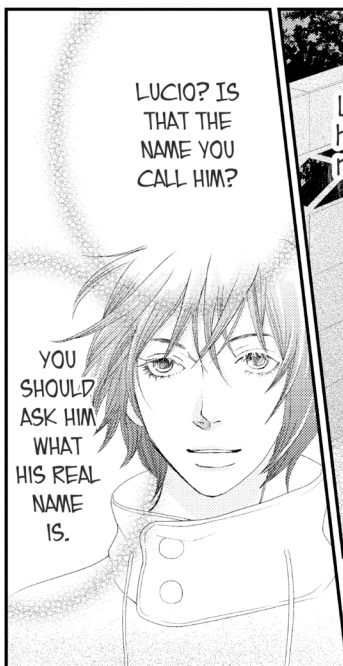
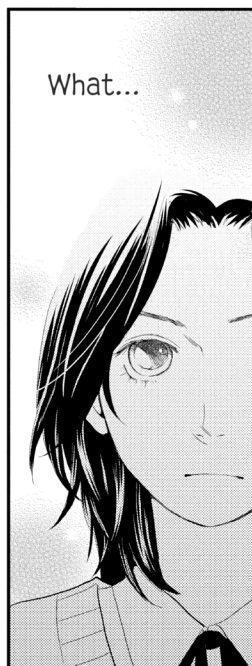
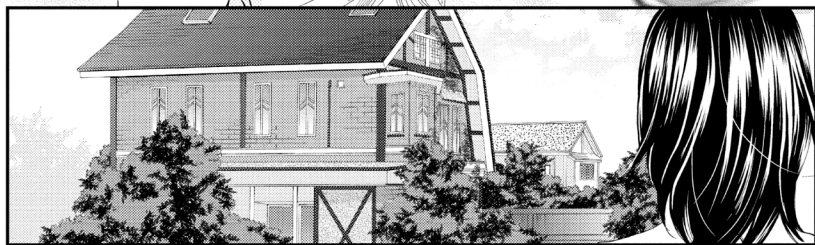
Acting  
like he's  
some  
kind of  
saint...

... to  
hide  
what a  
scumbag  
he really  
is.



That creep  
is serving  
a demon  
too!

GAH!







There's  
nothing  
good on TV  
anymore!  
Nothing  
but dumb  
specials!

It's true  
that he can  
be kind of  
pathetic  
...

More  
fussy  
than  
scary,  
really.

And a  
total coach  
potato.

And he's  
not very  
impressive  
for a  
demon.

...did  
Lee  
mean  
by  
that?

HE'S A  
REJECT  
THROUGH  
AND  
THROUGH.



WHAT?!

IF THAT'S  
WHAT HE  
MEANT BY  
"REJECT,"  
THAT'S  
FAIR...



WHO'S A  
REJECT  
NOW?



HEY.

WHAT'S  
WITH THE  
CLOTHES  
?

I WENT  
SHOPPING.



STOP  
READING MY  
THOUGHTS!

YOUR  
THOUGHTS  
WERE SPILLING  
OUT OF YOUR  
MOUTH.

Moron.



WHEN YOU  
WEAR NORMAL  
CLOTHES, YOU  
ACTUALLY LOOK  
LIKE A REAL  
PERSON.

THESE  
SUIT ME  
WELL.

RIGHT  
?

Yeah.



WHA  
...?

WHOA.



I CAN'T BE  
SEEN IN MY  
USUAL BLACK  
WARDROBE  
DURING SUMMER,  
RIGHT?





AND IT MADE  
ME THINK, "YOU  
KNOW... WE  
NEVER REALLY  
HAD A PARTY FOR  
NOBARA."

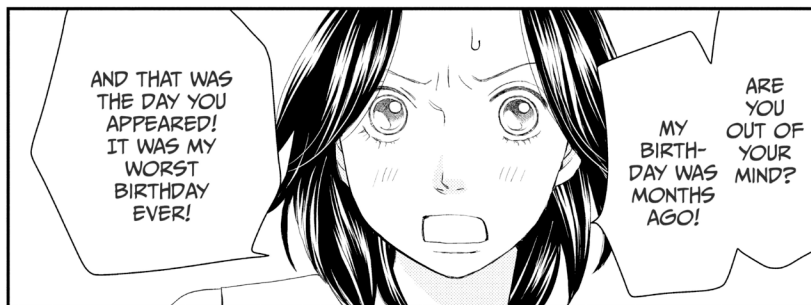
WHAT?!



A  
CAKE.

SO  
WHAT'S  
IN THE  
FANCY  
BOX?

THERE WAS  
A SPECIAL  
ON TV WHERE  
THIS BIG  
FAMILY THREW  
A BIRTHDAY  
PARTY.



AND THAT WAS  
THE DAY YOU  
APPEARED!  
IT WAS MY  
WORST  
BIRTHDAY  
EVER!

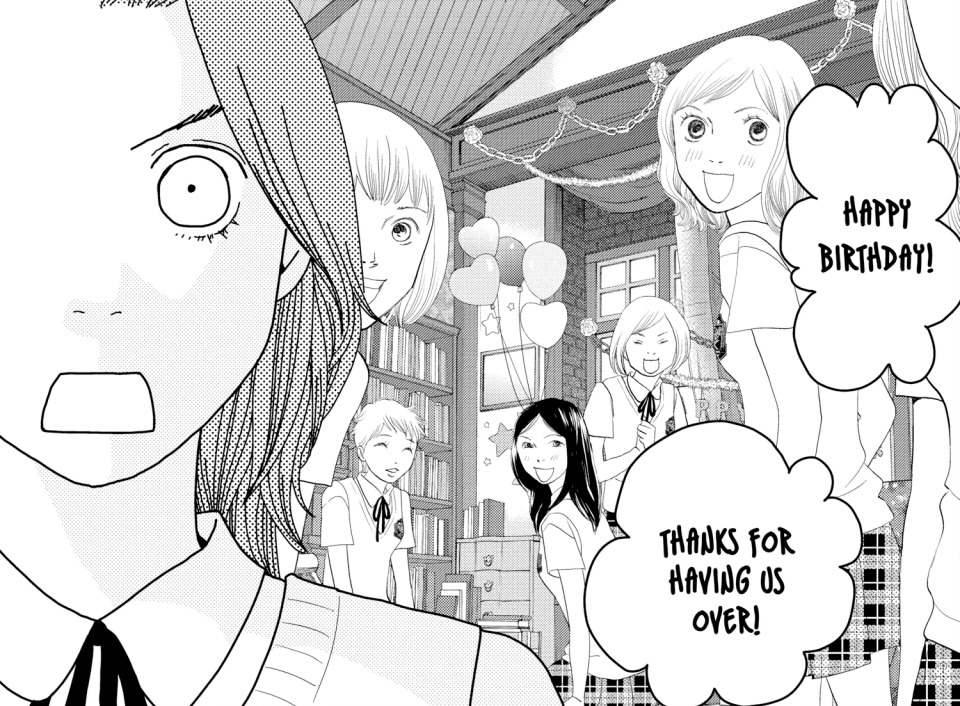
ARE  
YOU  
OUT OF  
YOUR  
MIND?  
  
MY  
BIRTH-  
DAY WAS  
MONTHS  
AGO!



Whaaaaat  
?!

I WENT  
ALL OUT.  
IT'LL BE  
FUN!

AW,  
LIGHTEN  
UP.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

THANKS FOR HAVING US OVER!

BUT YOU CALLED ME THORNY ROSE THIS MORNING.

LET'S BE FRIENDS FOREVER.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY!

WHAT ?!

ALL RIGHT EVERY-ONE!

ALL TOGETHER NOW!

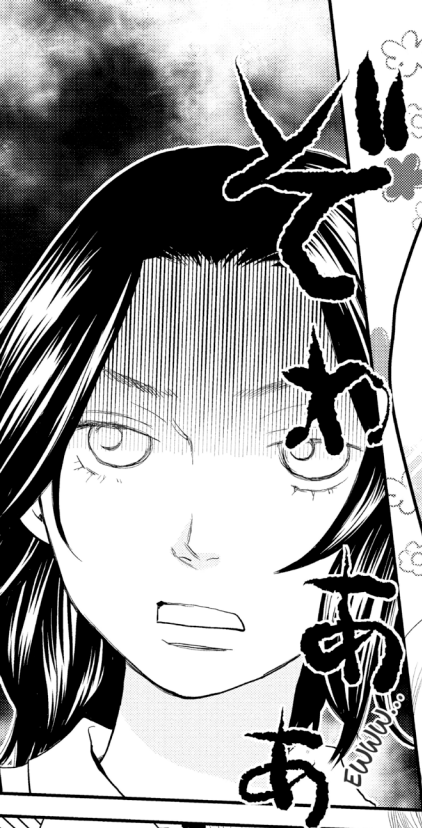
HUH ?  
IT WAS MONTHS AGO!

HAPPY BIRTH-DAY!

YAY !





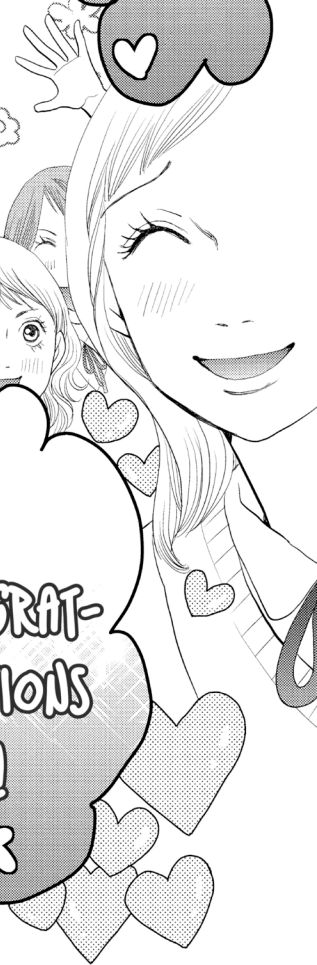


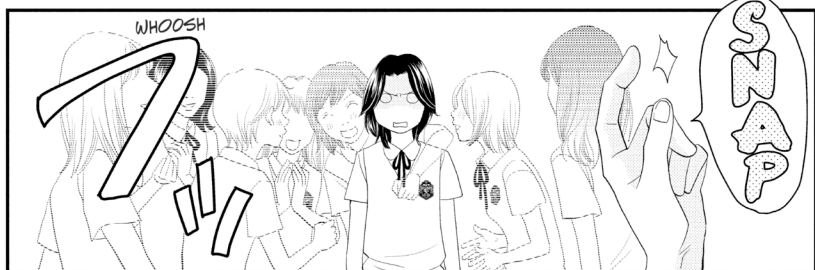
IT'S  
...  
YOUR  
SWEET  
SIXTEEN  
!

HAPPY  
BIRTH-  
DAY!  
♡



CONGRAT-  
ULATIONS  
!  
★









WHAT ON EARTH...?  
IS THAT THE RIVER?!

WE WERE  
JUST AT SCHOOL  
...

HOW'D  
WE GET  
HERE  
...?



I CANNOT  
BELIEVE  
YOU DID  
THAT! WHAT  
THE HELL  
KIND OF  
CRAP-ASS  
DEMON...?!



I. Am.  
NOT.  
Happy.

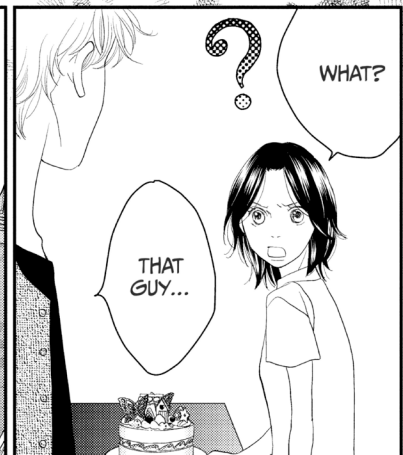
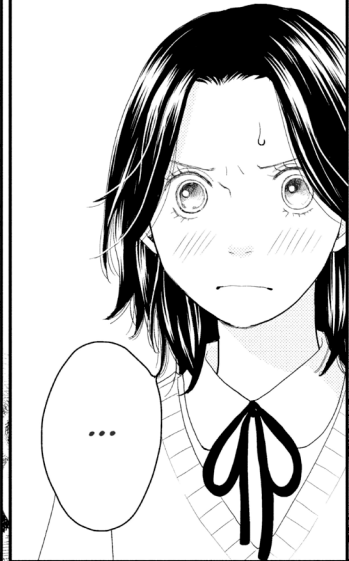
DON'T  
GET SO  
ANGRY.

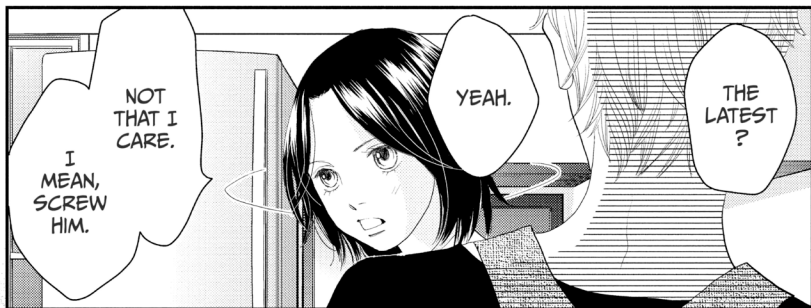
Come  
on,  
that  
was  
fun.



LOOK!

I GOT YOU  
A CAKE.  
LET'S HAVE  
SOME.







Never  
mind that.

WHAT  
IS IT?

What is  
this?

This  
feeling.



Bubbling  
up from  
inside of  
me...

It's so  
weird...

ばくっ  
MUNCH

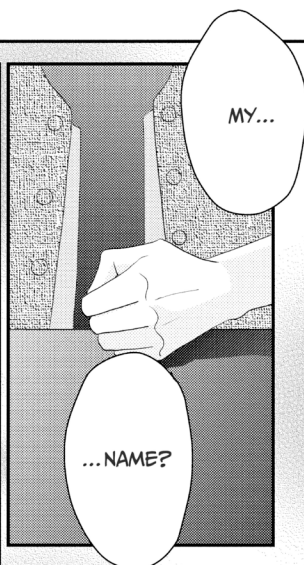
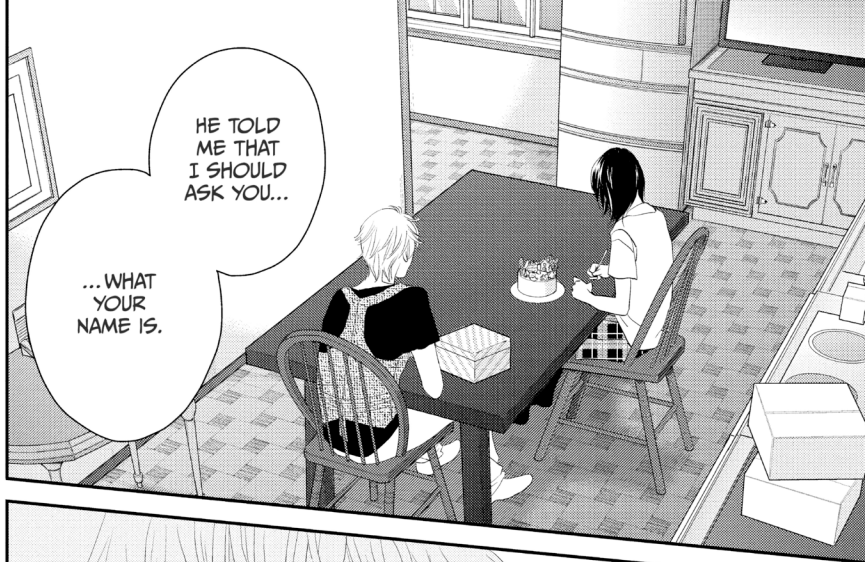
...  
having  
some-  
one  
care  
about  
me.

I COULDN'T  
MAKE OUT HIS  
REAL NAME.

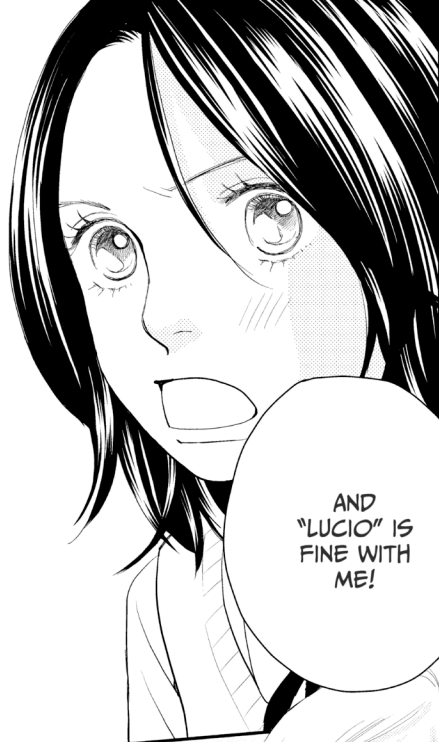
BUT HE  
SAID TO  
CALL HIM  
"LEE."

I SAW  
THAT  
DEMON  
AGAIN  
TODAY.

I GUESS I'D  
BETTER TELL  
YOU BEFORE  
YOU FIND OUT  
YOURSELF.







AND  
"LUCIO" IS  
FINE WITH  
ME!



BETTER  
THAN SOME  
WEIRD NAME  
I CAN'T EVEN  
PRONOUNCE.



LUCIO IS  
GOOD.

Like  
I care  
about  
anything  
that creep  
says.



...

MY  
NAME?

Lucio  
is just  
Lucio.



I  
COULDN'T  
TELL IF  
YOU IF I  
WANTED  
TO.

I  
DON'T  
WANT  
TO  
KNOW.

I TOLD  
YOU, I  
DON'T  
CARE!



HUH...?



I DON'T  
KNOW  
MY OWN  
NAME.

I DON'T  
KNOW IT.



THAT'S  
JUST HOW  
IT IS.

I DON'T  
REMEMBER  
BEING BORN.

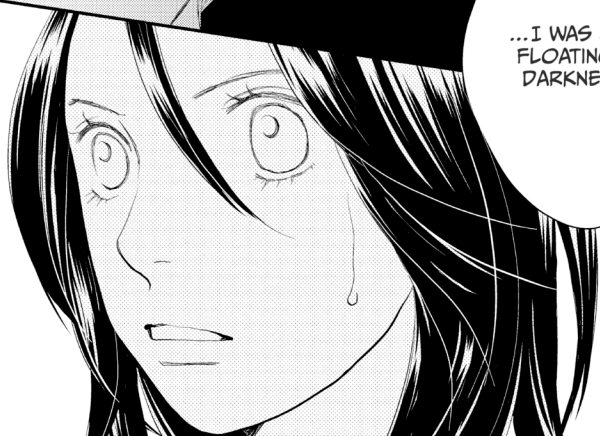


HOW...

HOW CAN  
YOU...?

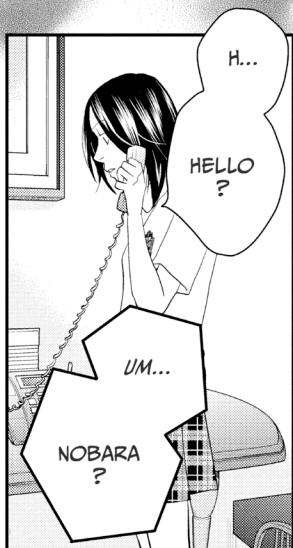


WHEN I  
GAINED  
CONSCIOUS-  
NESS...



...I WAS JUST  
FLOATING IN  
DARKNESS.





Greetings.



I'm  
Yoko  
Kamio.

Thank you for  
buying Crown of  
Thorns volume  
2.

This is my first  
ever fantasy  
manga!

I'm so glad I was  
able to fulfill my  
dream of writing  
fantasy.

And I'm honored  
that you read it  
till the end.

They asked  
me to write  
a little bonus  
manga at the  
end of this  
volume.



I hope you'll  
enjoy it!

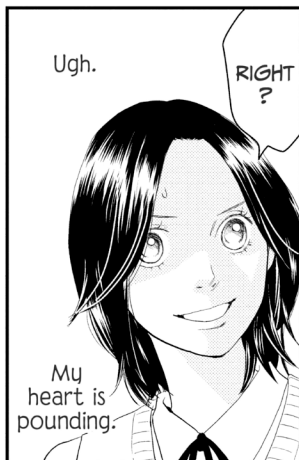


I'M  
AFRAID...

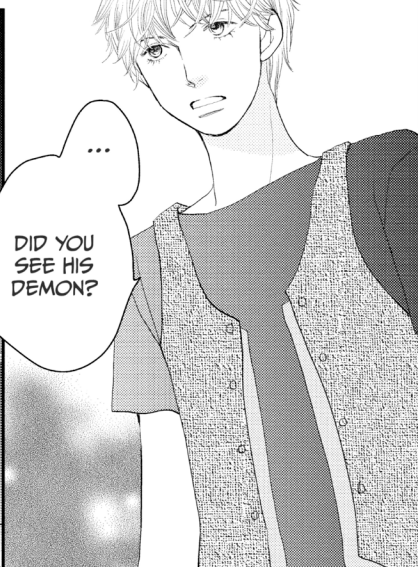
...HE HASN'T  
REGAINED  
CONSCIOUS-  
NESS.

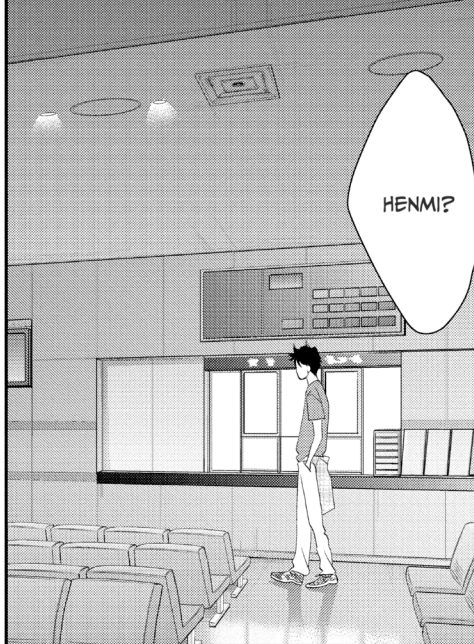
Why  
do I  
have...

... such  
a bad  
feeling  
about  
this?

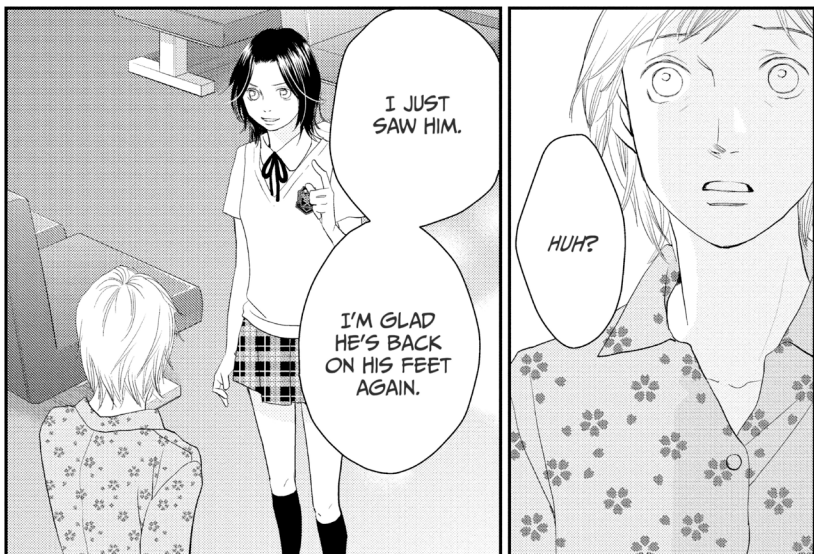
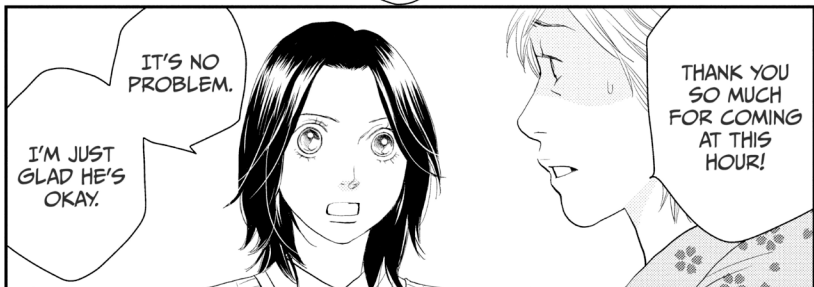
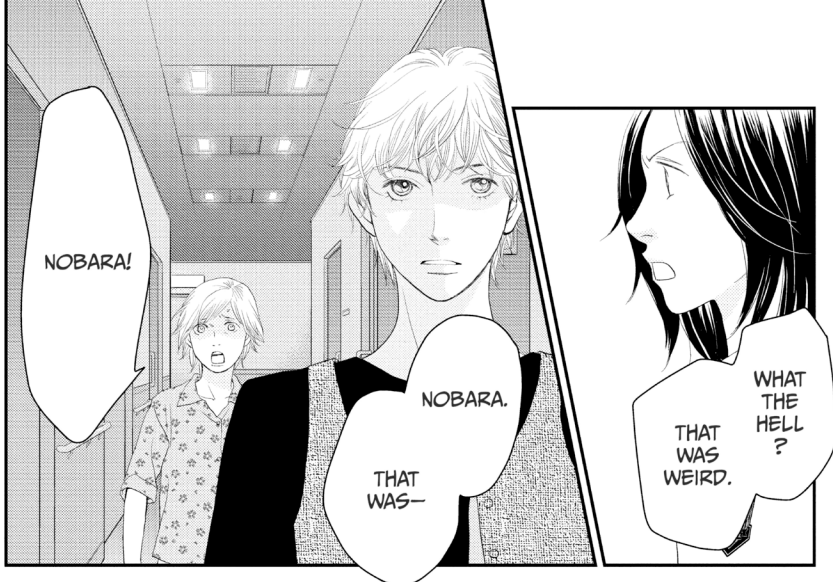


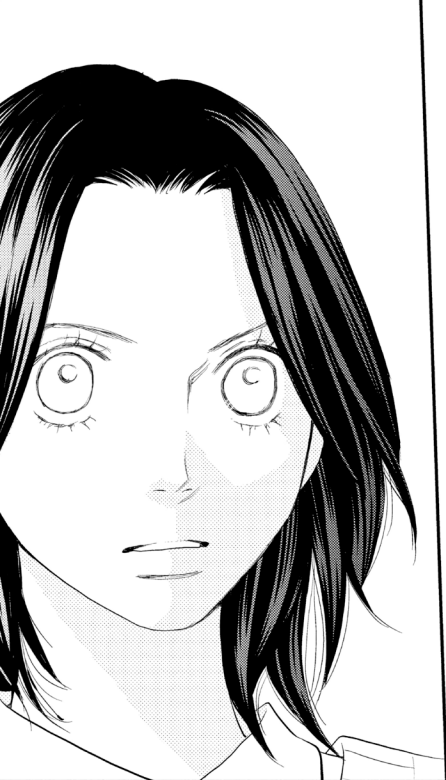
Sign: Shuei Hospital











I JUST  
WANTED TO  
KNOW WHAT  
LED TO HIM  
COLLAPSING  
LIKE THAT.

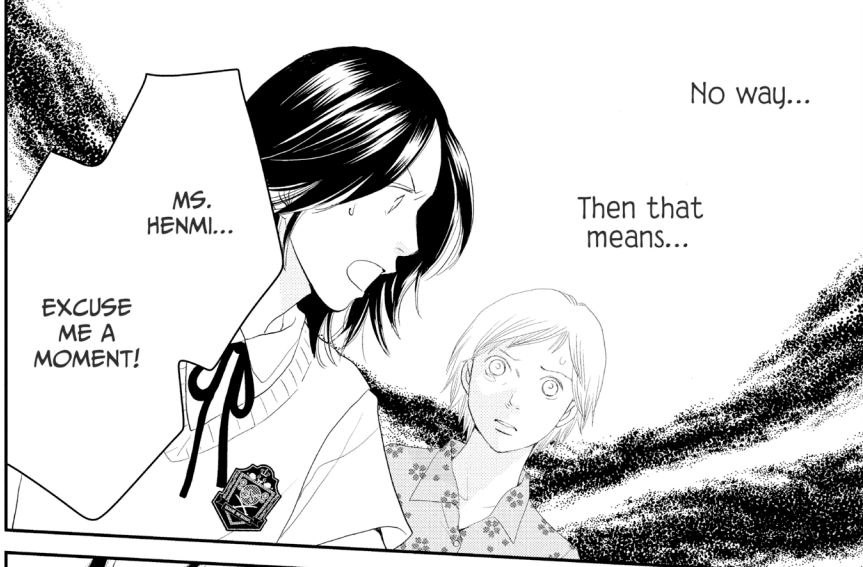


NOBARA,  
DEAR...

WHAT  
ARE YOU  
TALKING  
ABOUT?

SEIICHIRO  
...

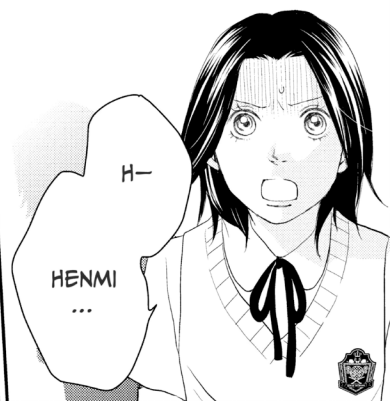
HE'S STILL  
UNCONSCIOUS.





**HENMI!**







This  
can't be  
good.

*WHEN I GAINED  
CONSCIOUSNESS*

...



*...I WAS JUST  
FLOATING IN  
DARKNESS.*





# いばらの冠

case  
8

CROWN  
OF  
THORNS

CLIFFS  
AHEAD

THORNS





YOU'RE  
HENMI!

WHO  
...?



Who...

...is  
Henmi?





Lucio...

JUST  
LIKE...

...ME.

Is this...

... what  
happened to  
you?

THIS IS WHAT  
BECOMES  
OF HUMANS  
WHO SERVE  
DEMONS.







"LUCIO,"  
WAS IT?

TCH.

AND  
WHAT  
ABOUT  
YOU?



FROM  
THE MOST  
DREADFUL  
DEMON OF  
ALL.



A SADLY  
FAMILIAR  
OUTCOME.



ISN'T THAT  
ADORABLE.

HAS  
SOMEONE  
CLIPPED  
YOUR  
WINGS?



PLAYING  
THE BOY-  
FRIEND TO  
THE HUMAN  
YOU'VE  
ENSLAVED  
?



BUT IF  
YOU LAY A  
FINGER ON  
HER...



I KNOW  
HOW MUCH  
YOU WANT  
NOBARA.

HOW MUCH  
YOU'D RATHER  
HAVE HER THAN  
YOUR LITTLE  
FRIEND UP  
THERE.



...I WILL  
MAKE YOU  
PAY FOR IT.



WHAT A  
TOUCHING  
SENTIMENT.

STILL...

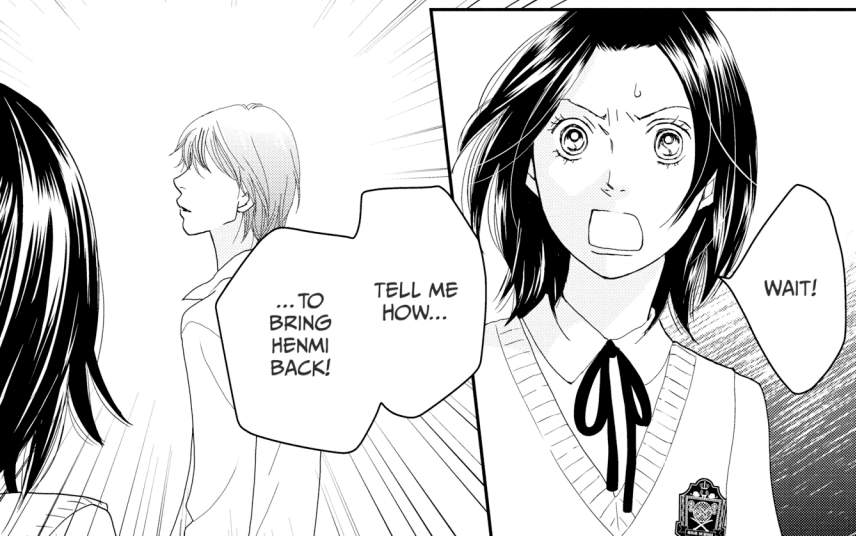


REJECT.

NO  
MATTER  
HOW  
WELL YOU  
TWO GET  
ALONG

...

...THIS IS  
HOW THINGS  
ALWAYS END,  
BETWEEN  
HUMANS AND  
DEMONS.

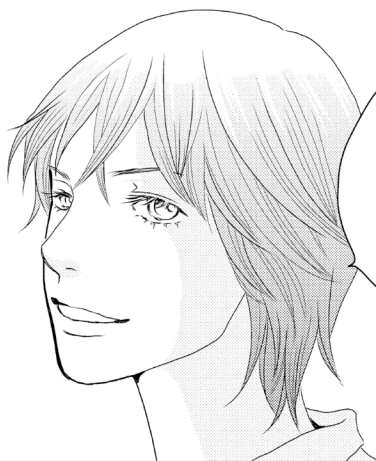


...TO  
BRING  
HENMI  
BACK!

TELL ME  
HOW...

WAIT!

POOR,  
NAMELESS  
LUCIO.



LUCIO  
RIGHT  
THERE IS  
YOUR HINT.

That's right.  
Henmi's  
forgotten his  
name too.



"Name-  
less  
..."



**HENMI!**

**GET  
DOWN  
HERE!**



IT'S  
POSSIBLE.



NAMES  
...!

CAN  
DEMONS  
RETURN  
IF THEY  
REMEMBER  
THEIR  
NAMES?





I KNOW  
YOU WANT  
THIS, HENMI!



ヘヘヘ  
HEH HEH HEH

Henmi!  
Come  
down!

ヘヘヘ  
MUTTER  
MUTTER

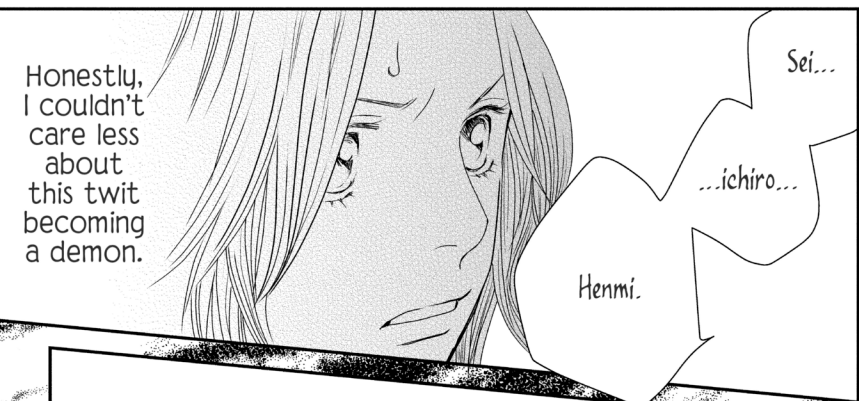


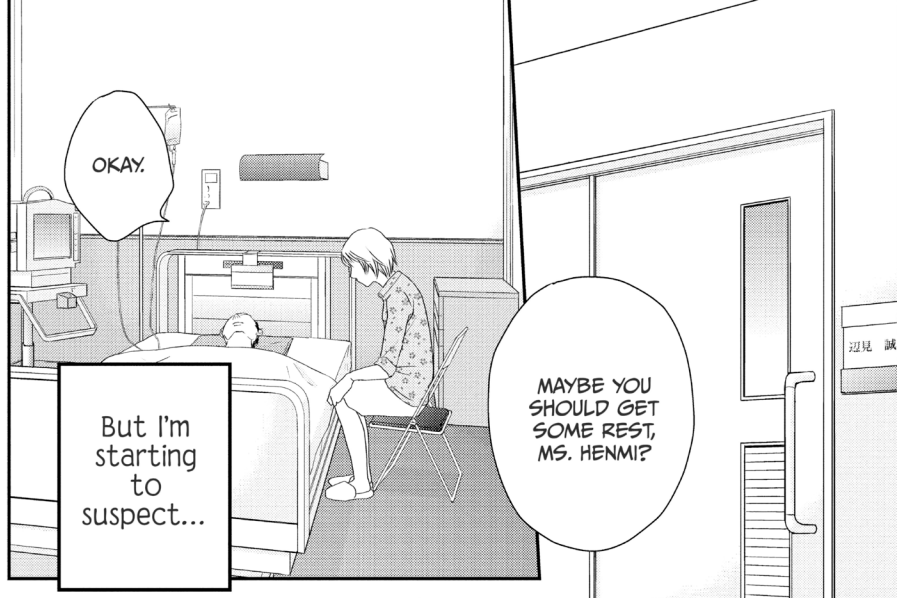
COME  
AND GET  
IT!



オ  
OH!







OKAY.

But I'm  
starting  
to  
suspect...

MAYBE YOU  
SHOULD GET  
SOME REST,  
MS. HENMI?



... Lucio  
used  
to be a  
human  
too.

Henmi...

Hen...

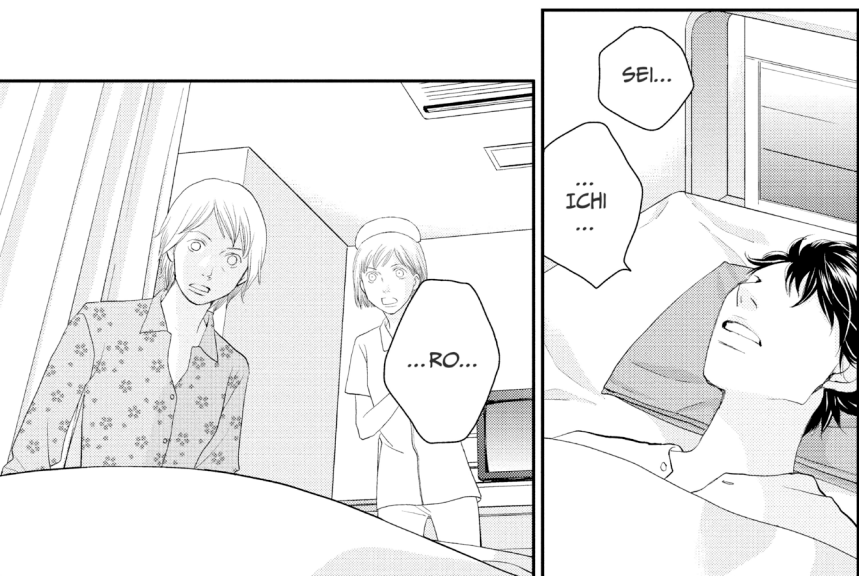
... that  
just like  
Henmi...



My  
name...



THAT'S  
SEVEN  
TIMES.





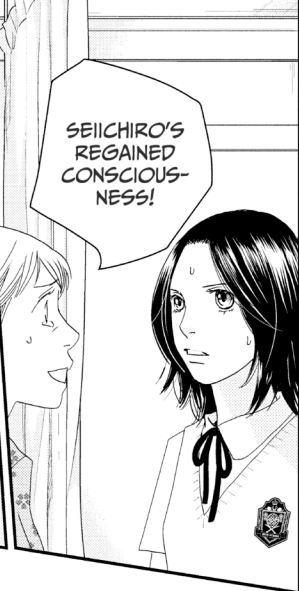




WHAT  
ARE YOU  
DOING  
HERE?

FU...  
FUKAMI,  
RIGHT  
?

WHAT  
?



SEIICHIRO'S  
REGAINED  
CONSCIOUS-  
NESS!



RIGHT,  
FUKAMI?

THERE'S  
NO WAY.



NOBARA WAS  
WITH YOU  
WHEN YOU  
COLLAPSED.

WHAT?

WHY  
WOULD  
SHE AND  
I...?



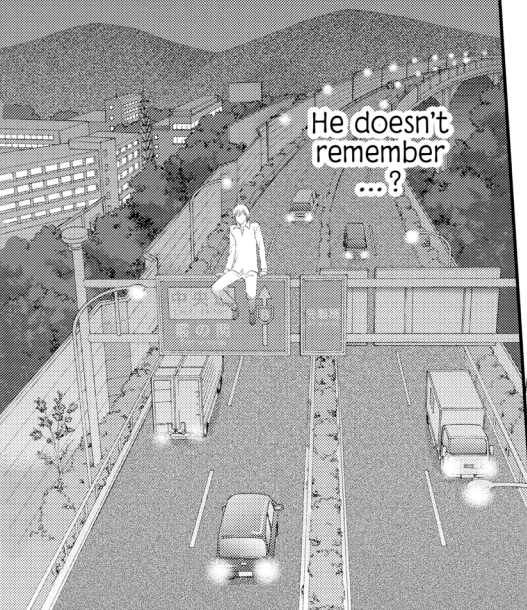


I MEAN,  
I'VE  
SEEN HER  
AROUND  
A FEW  
TIMES...

I HAVEN'T  
SAID A WORD  
TO HER  
SINCE GRADE  
SCHOOL!



SEI!



He doesn't  
remember  
...?



WHAT  
ARE YOU  
TALKING  
ABOUT?

YOU'RE  
BEING  
INCREDIBLY  
RUDE TO  
NOBARA!

ALL THE  
MALICE  
IN HIM IS  
GONE.

IT WAS  
LIKE HE'S A  
DIFFERENT  
PERSON.

ONE  
OF HIS  
RUSES?



NOW I  
CAN'T EVEN  
GET BACK  
AT HIM FOR  
IT ALL!

AFTER  
ALL THE  
HORRIBLE  
THINGS HE  
DID...

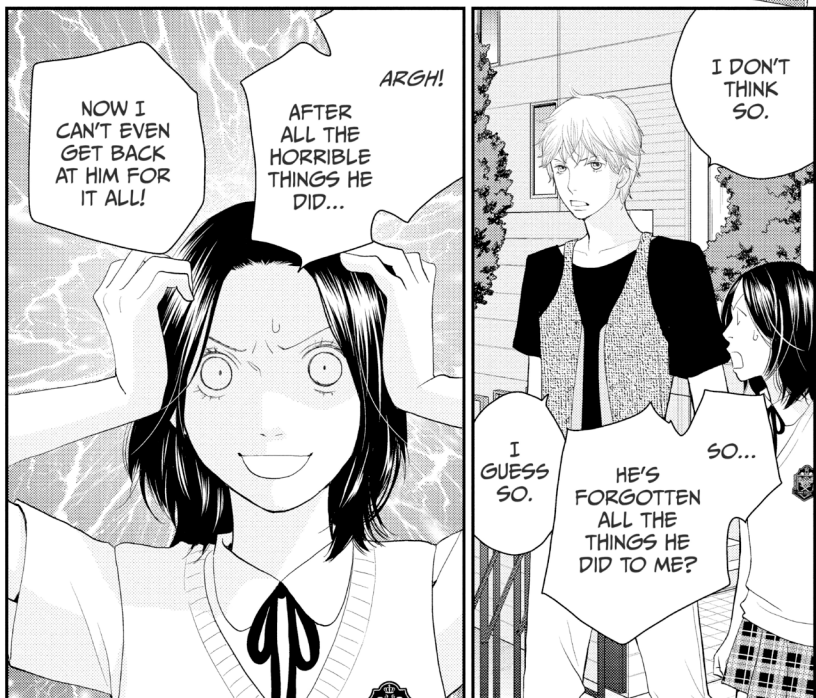
ARGH!

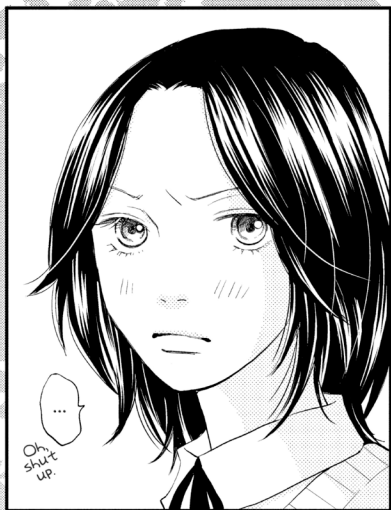
I DON'T  
THINK  
SO.

I  
GUESS  
SO.

HE'S  
FORGOTTEN  
ALL THE  
THINGS HE  
DID TO ME?

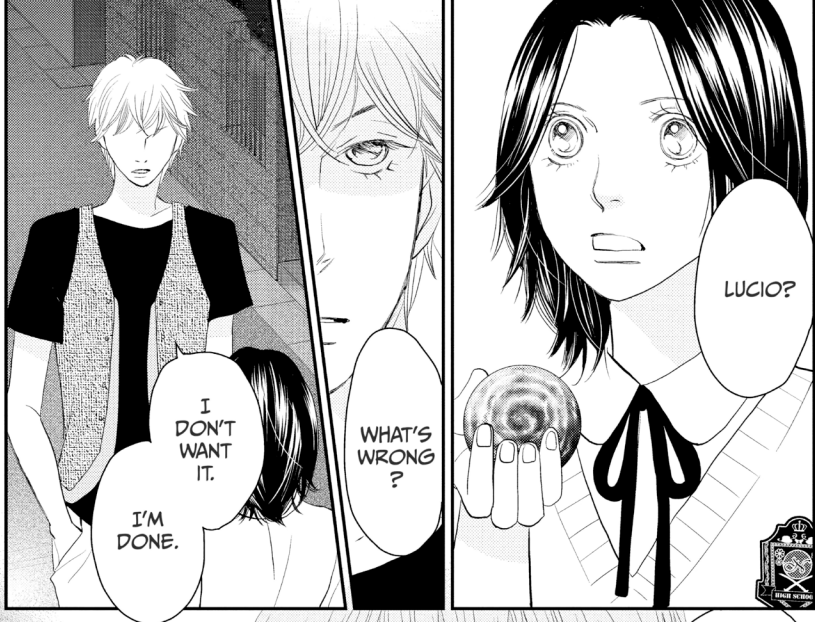
SO...













I CAN  
MAKE THE  
ORBS  
WITHOUT IT  
AFFECTING  
ME.

YOU  
SAID SO  
YOURSELF,  
REMEMBER  
?

SO I'LL KEEP  
ON BANGING  
THEM OUT  
FOR YOU!

THIS IS BECAUSE  
OF WHAT LEE SAID,  
RIGHT? ABOUT  
HOW THINGS END  
BETWEEN HUMANS  
AND DEMONS?

Is  
Lucio...

... trying to  
leave me?

I GOTTA  
DO THIS TO  
STAY ALIVE,  
REMEMBER?

WHO  
DOES  
IT HELP  
FOR ME  
TO QUIT?

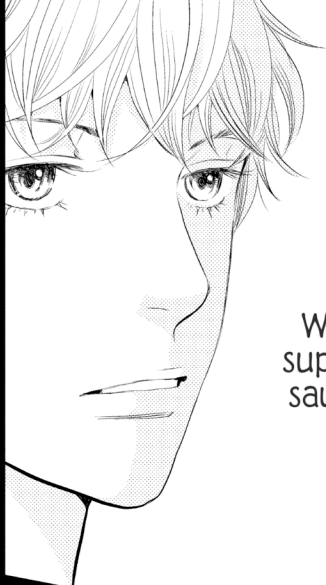
What  
am I  
doing?

IF  
THAT'S  
WHAT  
YOU  
WANT  
...

... YOU  
SHOULD  
HAVE JUST  
LET ME DIE  
TO BEGIN  
WITH!

Why  
am I  
saying  
it like  
this?

I MEAN,  
COULD YOU  
BE MORE  
SELFISH?!



What am I  
supposed to  
say to stop  
him?



I have  
no  
idea.

I've never  
been this close  
to anyone  
before...

WHAT'S  
WRONG  
WITH  
YOU!

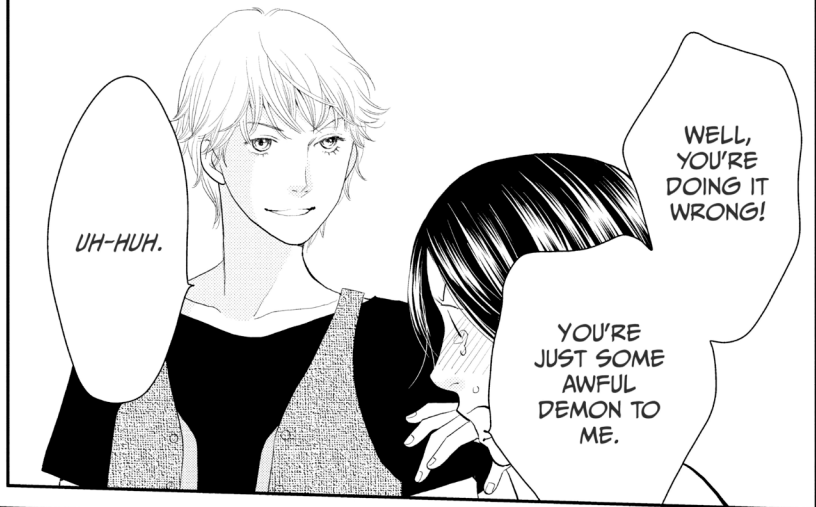
YOU  
STUPID  
DEMON!





WHO DO  
YOU THINK  
YOU'RE  
TALKING  
TO?

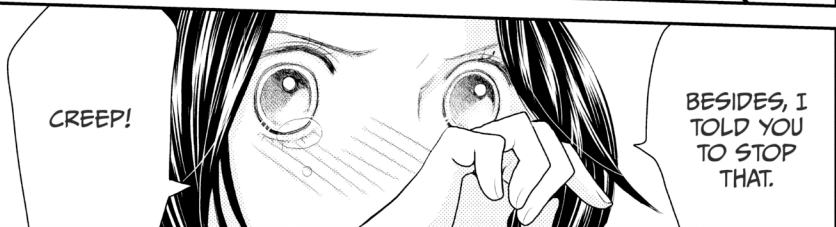
READING  
HUMAN  
MINDS IS  
WHAT I  
DO.



UH-HUH.

WELL,  
YOU'RE  
DOING IT  
WRONG!

YOU'RE  
JUST SOME  
AWFUL  
DEMON TO  
ME.



CREEP!

BESIDES, I  
TOLD YOU  
TO STOP  
THAT.



...and  
now I  
can't stop  
crying.

For a  
moment I  
thought  
he might  
leave  
me...



LIKE I  
HAVE ANY  
IDEA!

YOU  
KNOW I  
CAN'T READ  
DEMON  
MINDS.



NOBARA  
...

IT'S  
YOUR  
TURN.

TELL ME  
WHAT I'M  
THINKING.



SURE.

BUT YOU  
KNOW...



IT LOOKS  
LIKE I MIGHT  
HAVE BEEN  
HUMAN ONCE  
TOO.

At  
night  
...

... white  
smoke  
seeps out  
of the  
smoke-  
stacks...

Just  
like the  
whisper

...

... that  
slips like a  
sigh from  
Lucio's  
lips.

I WANT  
TO KNOW  
MY OWN  
NAME.





# いはの冠

GROWN  
OF  
THORNS

case  
9





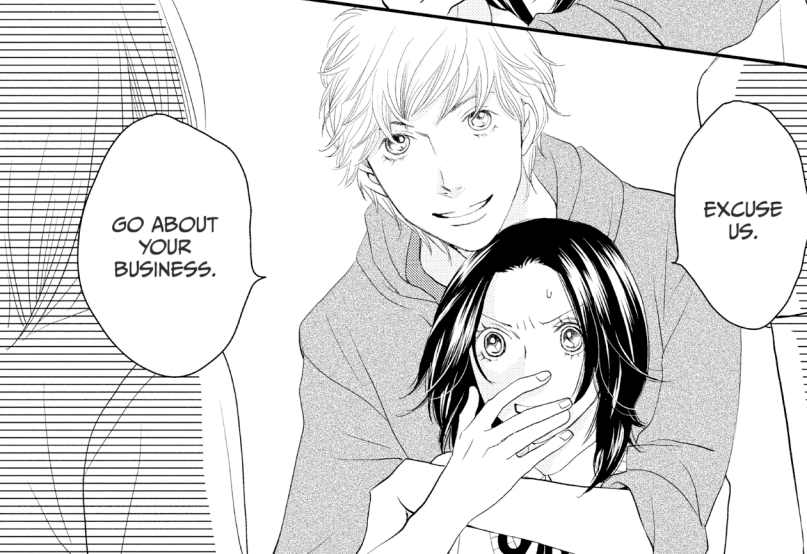
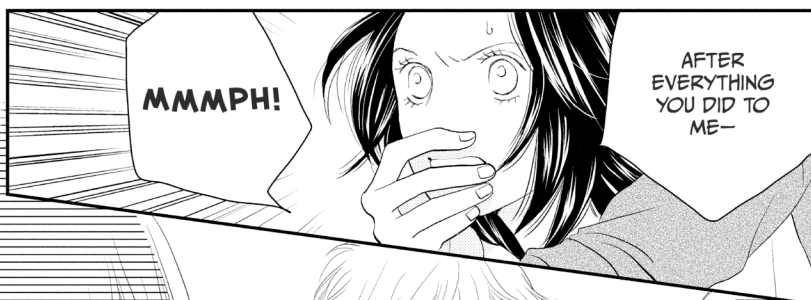
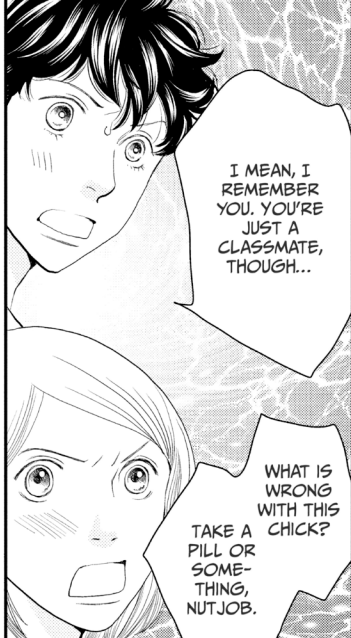
Maybe I  
should have  
come up  
with a better  
name.

Some-  
thing  
cooler  
than  
Lucio.

Like  
Orlando.  
Or  
George.

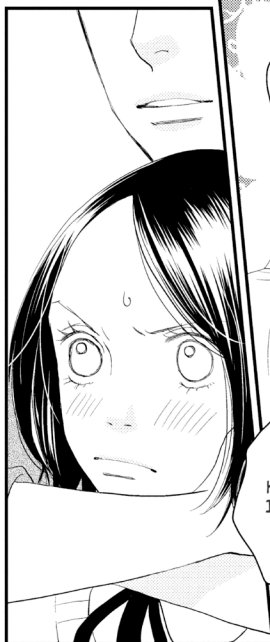








AREN'T  
YOU OVER  
THIS YET?



HE, LIKE,  
LITERALLY  
SPARKLED.

WHOA, THAT  
DUDE WAS  
HANDSOME!

HONESTLY,  
I HAVE NO  
IDEA.

WHAT'S  
THEIR DEAL,  
SEIICHIRO?



DO YOU  
REALLY...

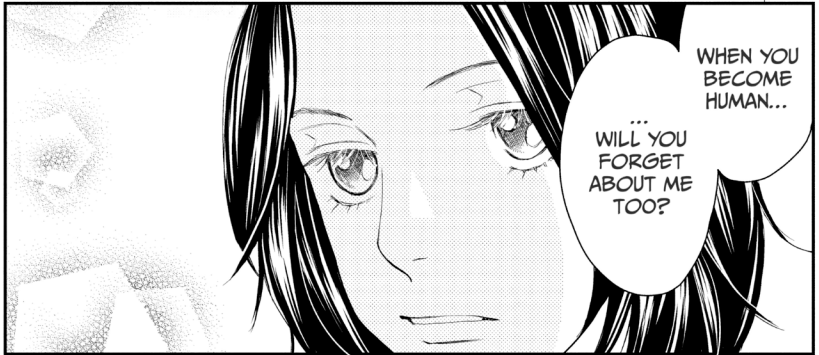
...WANT TO  
LEARN YOUR  
NAME?



うん...  
うん...

GIVE  
IT UP  
ALREADY!

HENMI DOESN'T  
REMEMBER  
ANYTHING!





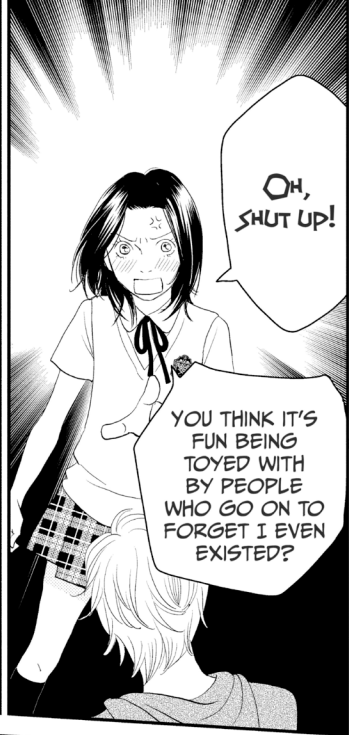


SEE IF  
I CARE!

YOU  
WANT TO  
LEAVE? THEN  
GO RIGHT  
AHEAD!

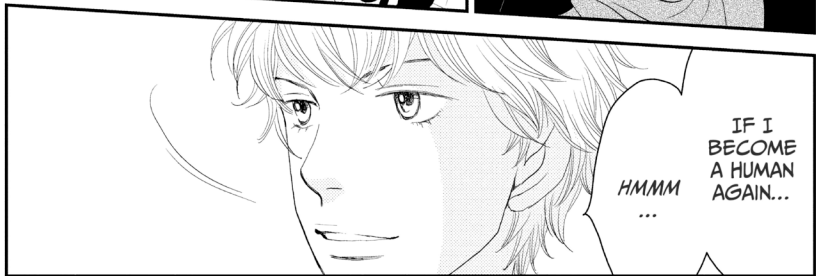
I GUESS  
WILD ROSES  
REALLY  
DO HAVE  
THORNS.

AGAIN  
WITH THE  
TEMPER!



OH,  
SHUT UP!

YOU THINK IT'S  
FUN BEING  
TOYED WITH  
BY PEOPLE  
WHO GO ON TO  
FORGET I EVEN  
EXISTED?



HMMM  
...

IF I  
BECOME  
A HUMAN  
AGAIN...



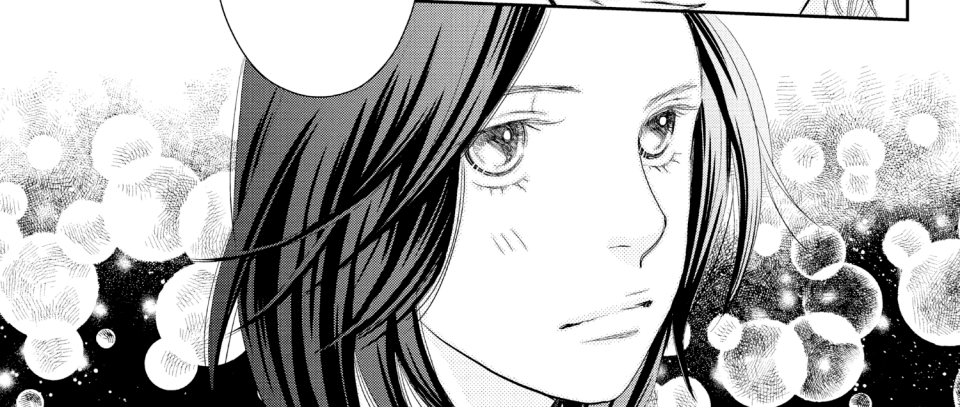
SMOOCHY  
SMOOCH

...



やあやあ  
おはよう  
Come on,  
quit it!  
People are  
watching!

イチャイチャ  
CUDDLE  
CUDDLE

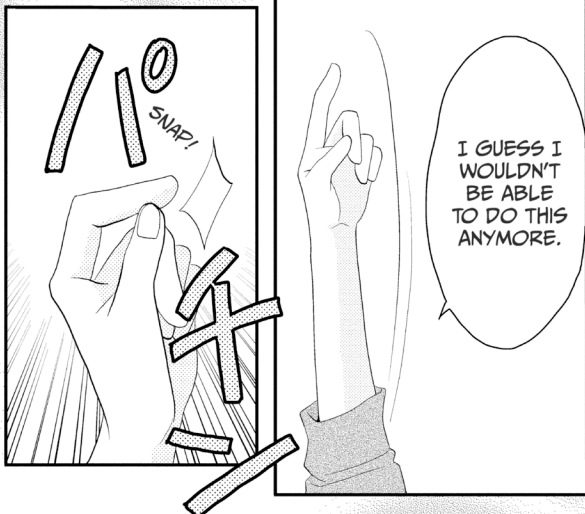




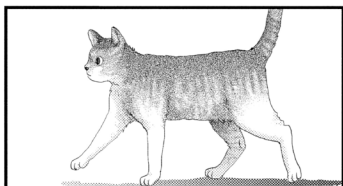
...I THINK YOU  
AND I WOULD  
REALLY GET  
ALONG.

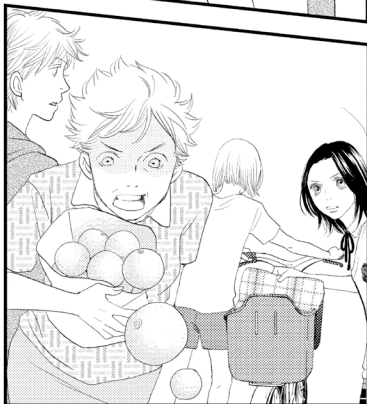
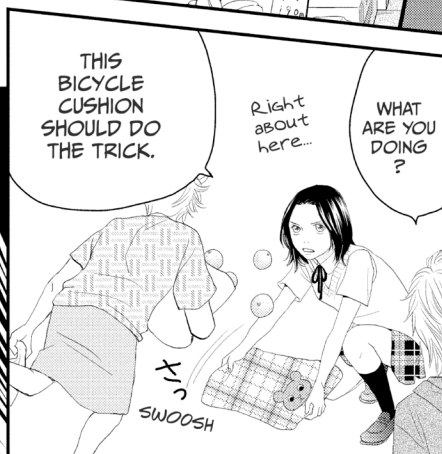
I feel so  
happy...

I...  
GUESS  
SO.



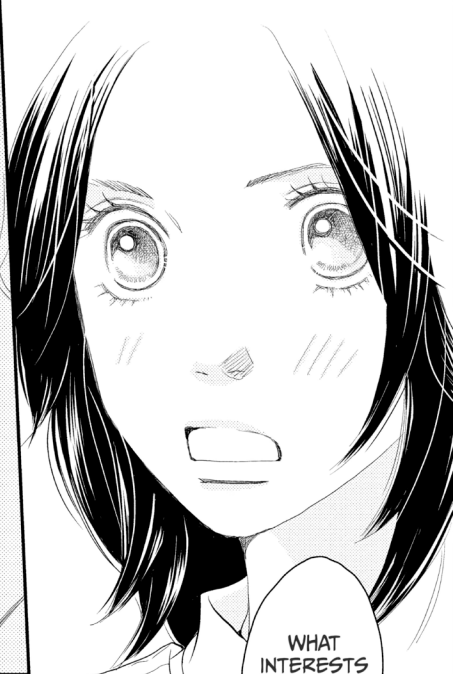
And at the same time, so worried.











Wow.

I said  
it!

...



BUT...

IT'LL BE  
OKAY.

WHAT  
INTERESTS  
ME...

...IS  
CONTINUING  
TO BE WITH  
YOU.



BUT I'LL STILL  
REMEMBER.

IF YOU  
BECOME  
HUMAN  
AGAIN...

...  
MAYBE YOU'LL  
FORGET ALL  
THIS, THE WAY  
HENMI DID...



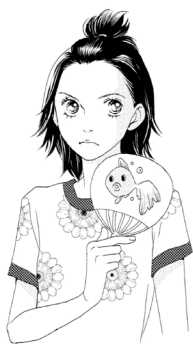
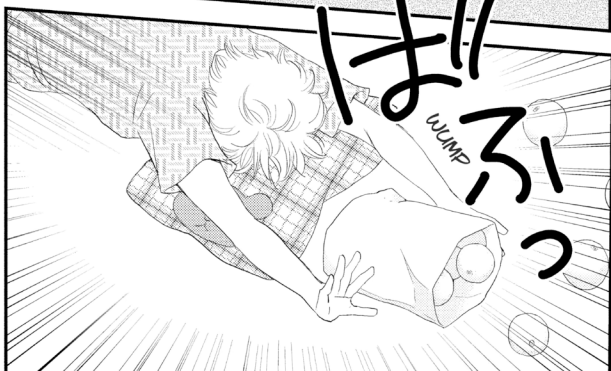
LET'S  
RESTORE  
TIME,  
FIRST.

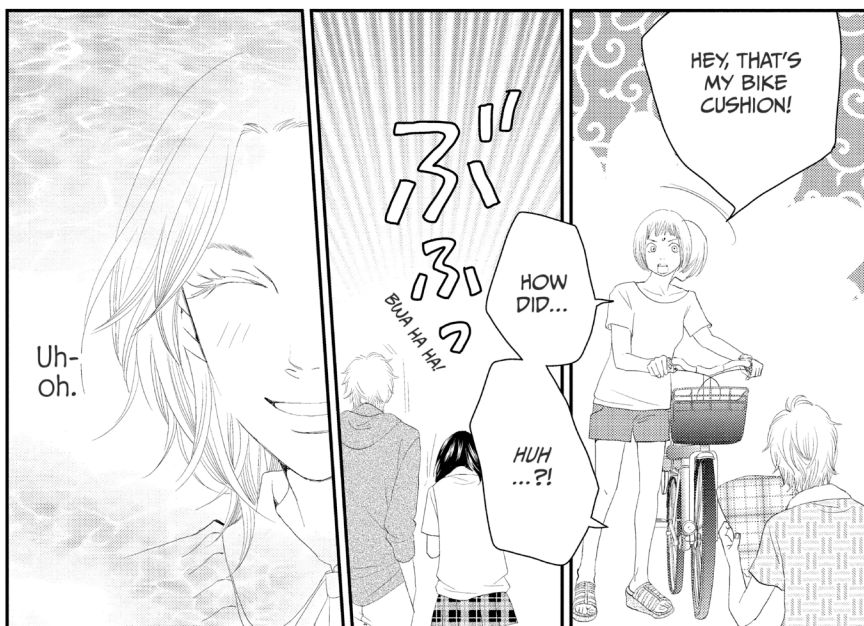
WELL  
...



THE  
PROBLEM  
IS...

HOW ARE WE  
SUPPOSED  
TO FIND YOUR  
NAME?



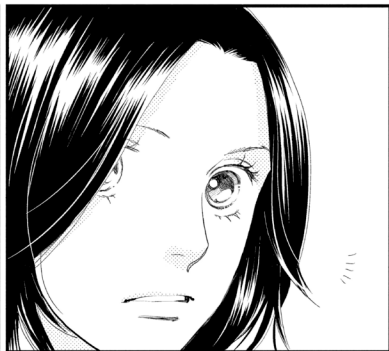
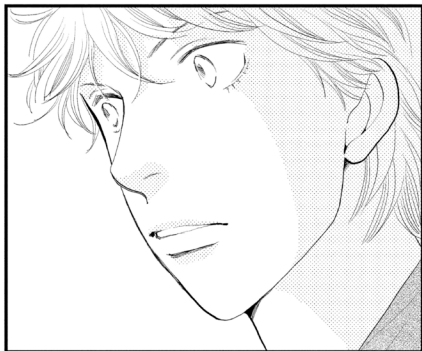




And he  
hasn't  
responded  
at all.

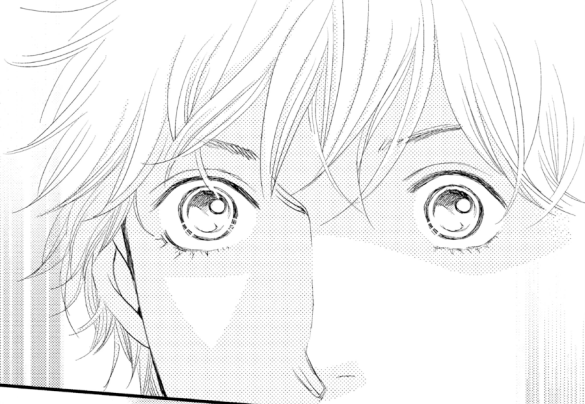


I  
basically  
told  
him I  
wanted  
to be  
with  
him.



WHAT...

WHAT  
IS IT?



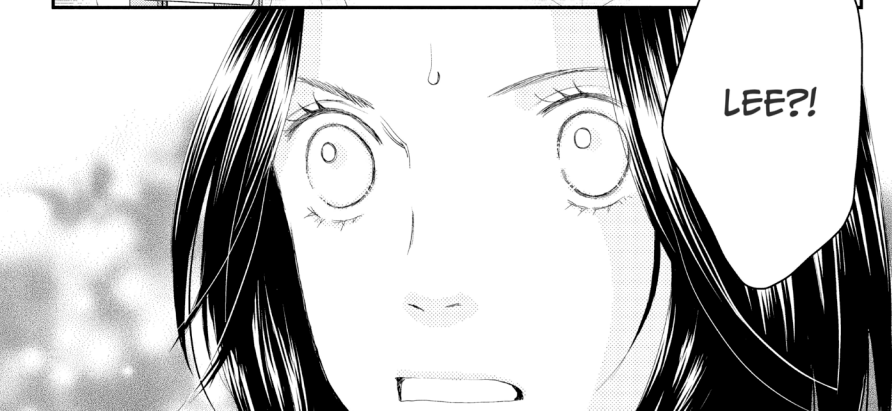
LUCIO?



WHERE'S THAT?

EUROPE?







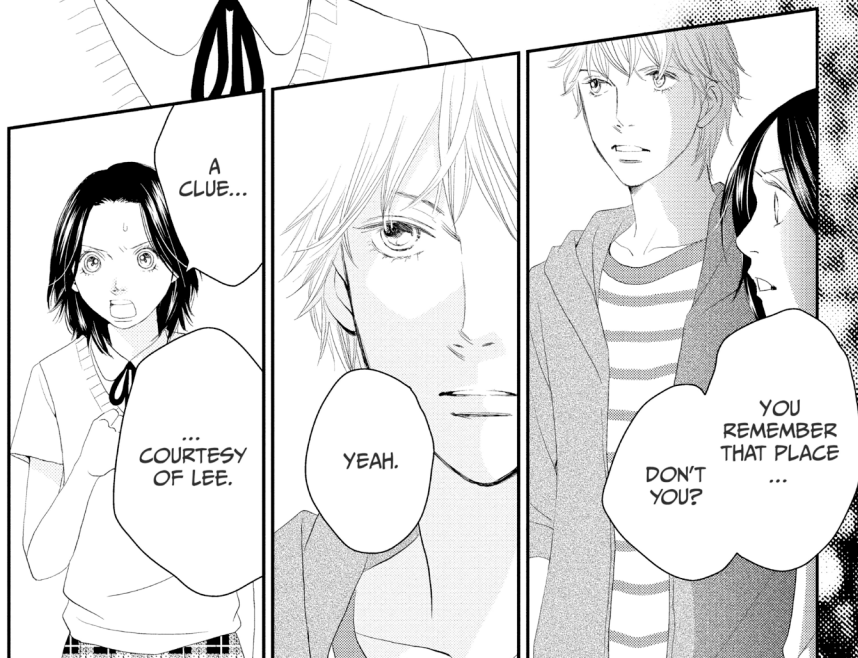
... Where  
Lucio is  
from?

Could  
that  
be...



AND  
NOW  
...  
...IT'S  
TIME  
FOR THE  
NEWS.

Is that  
it?



A  
CLUE...

...  
COURTESY  
OF LEE.

YEAH.

YOU  
REMEMBER  
THAT PLACE  
...  
DON'T  
YOU?



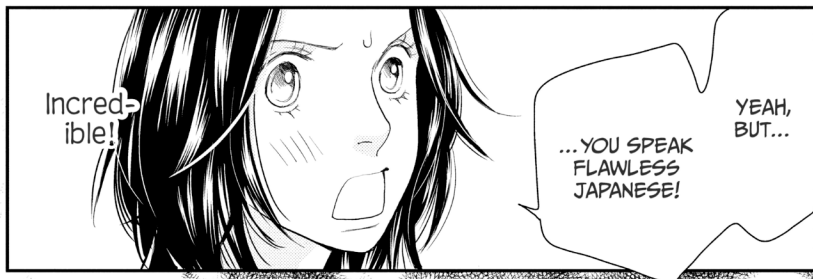
WELL, THERE  
AREN'T A LOT  
OF ASIANS WHO  
LOOK LIKE ME.



GOT-  
LAND  
ISLAND  
...

...IN  
SWEDEN.

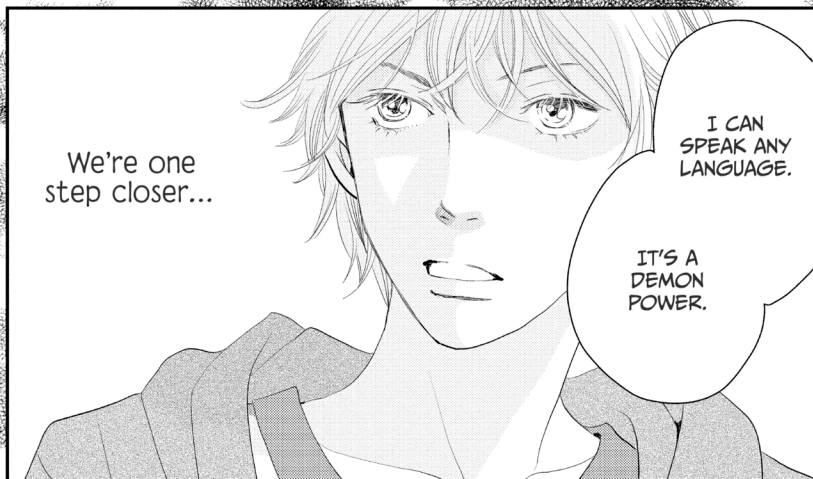
SO YOU  
ARE FROM  
EUROPE!



Incred-  
ible!

...YOU SPEAK  
FLAWLESS  
JAPANESE!

YEAH,  
BUT...



We're one  
step closer...

I CAN  
SPEAK ANY  
LANGUAGE.

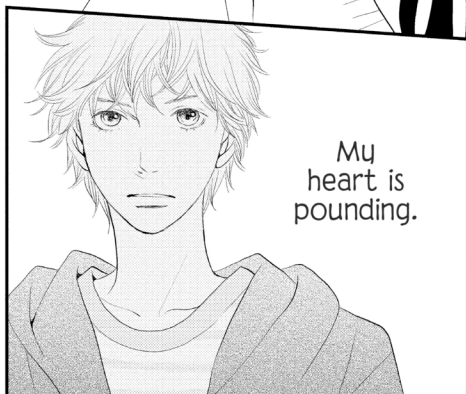
IT'S A  
DEMON  
POWER.



I'M  
GONNA  
...

...GO TO THE  
SCHOOL'S  
COMPUTER  
LAB AND  
DO SOME  
RESEARCH.

Will I get  
to meet  
a human  
Lucio?



My  
heart is  
pounding.



I KNEW I  
SHOULD HAVE  
GOTTEN A  
COMPUTER  
FOR HOME...

OH,  
WELL.

I'LL CATCH  
YOU LATER.



Oh! I'd  
better  
start  
getting  
some  
money  
together  
!

What will  
we do  
about the  
language  
issue?



I've never  
left the  
country  
before.

I hope it'll  
be okay.

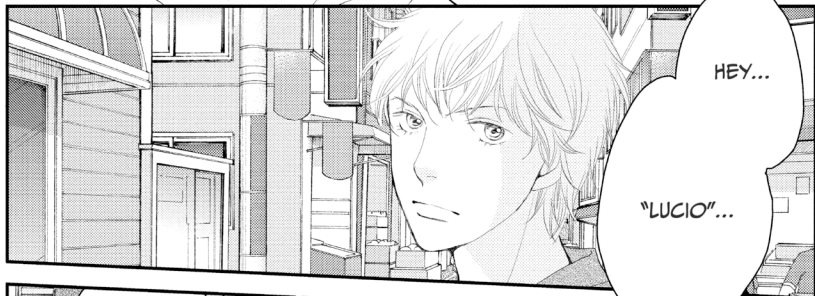
IMPRESSIVE.





HUMANS  
ARE SO  
FASCINATING.

HOW  
QUICKLY  
THEY  
CHANGE!



HEY...

"LUCIO"...

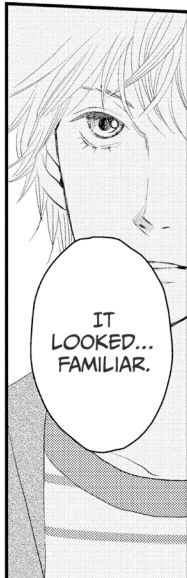


MOST  
WOULDN'T  
REMEMBER  
AT ALL.

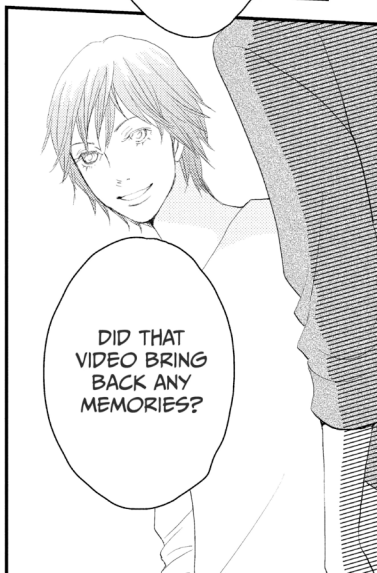
INTER-  
ESTING.

あは  
HMM...

BUT YOU  
WERE A  
BETTER  
HUMAN  
THAN  
MOST.



IT  
LOOKED...  
FAMILIAR.



DID THAT  
VIDEO  
BRING  
BACK ANY  
MEMORIES?





THE ONE  
WHO MADE  
ME LIKE  
THIS.

HEY  
NOW.

YOU  
WANTED  
THIS.



WAS IT  
YOU?

THE  
DEMON I  
SERVED.



YOU ASKED  
ME TO TAKE  
YOU WITH ME.

YOU'D  
LOST YOUR  
PARENTS, YOU  
HAD NO LIVING  
RELATIVES.



GRANDPA...

GRANDPA'S  
DEAD...



The only  
person  
who ever  
cared  
about me.



I'm so  
sad.

There's no  
one left who  
understands  
me.

Nobara.

But...

I can still  
hear that  
voice...

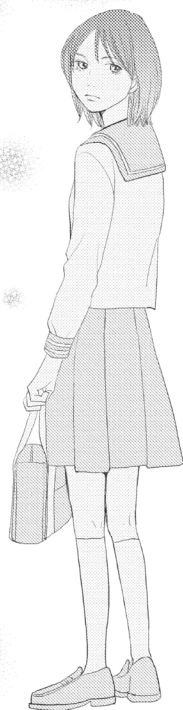


As long  
as I can  
hear that  
voice...

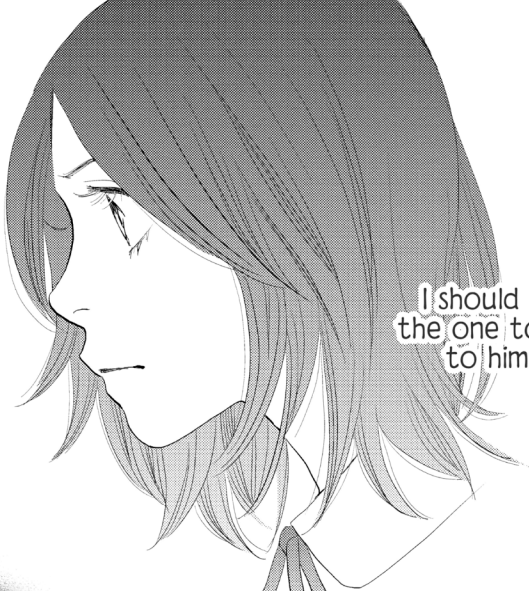
I'll never  
truly be  
alone.

How I  
yearn for  
the day  
that we  
can finally  
meet.

COMPUTER LAB








Lucio might  
be asleep, all  
alone.

I should be  
the one to go  
to him.



Our  
last day  
together  
...

... was  
fast  
approach-  
ing.

And I was  
the only  
one who  
didn't seem  
to know it.





# いざな

CROWN  
OF  
THORNS

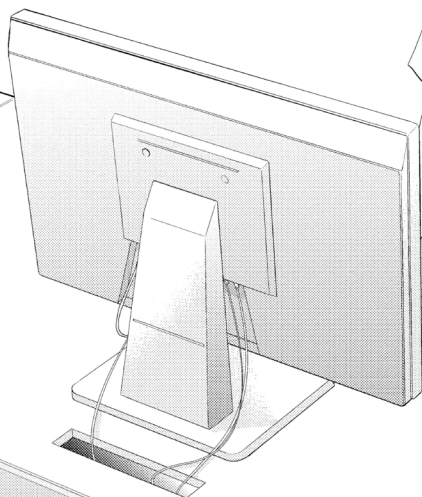
case  
10

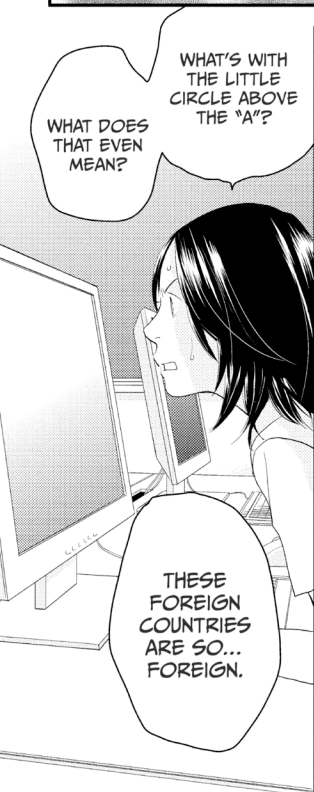
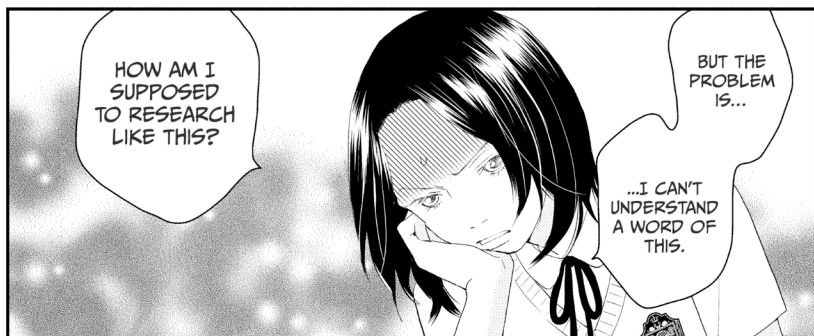
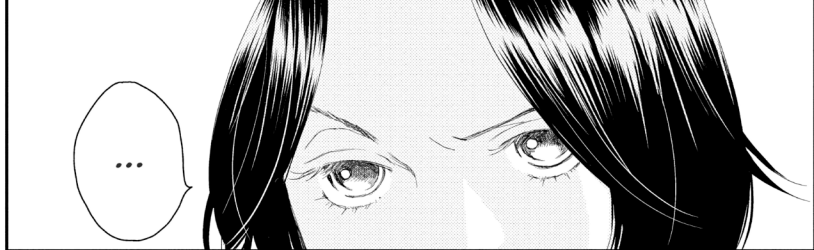


MAYBE  
YOU'LL  
FIND WHAT  
YOU SEEK  
THERE.

GOTLAND  
ISLAND IN  
SWEDEN.

That might  
be where  
the human  
Lucio is.





Pretty  
funny that  
it would  
be for a  
demon.

I've never  
worked so  
hard for  
someone  
else  
before.

WHAT  
NOW  
...?

...  
now  
...

...I kind  
of get  
it.

I'd see  
them  
doing  
anything  
and  
ever-  
thing for  
some  
guy...

Before  
this...

... I never  
really  
understood  
what the  
other girls  
were talking  
about.

But...

... and I'd  
only ever  
make fun  
of them  
for it.



When-  
ever I  
come  
home.

I'M  
BACK.

... there's  
always  
someone  
to say...

WELCOME  
HOME.

WELCOME  
HOME.

... this is  
all that  
matters to  
me now.

And  
that's  
why...

I want to  
be the  
one...

... saying  
those  
words.



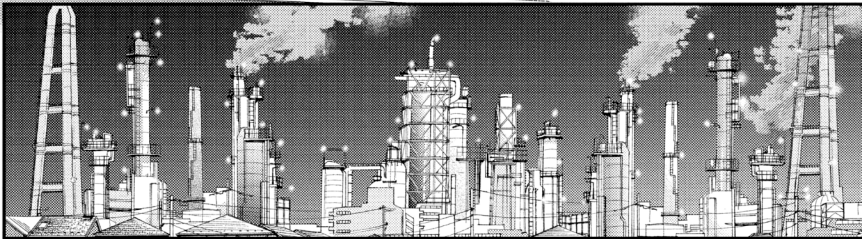


I'LL  
RUN THIS  
THROUGH  
THE TRANS-  
LATOR.



MISSING  
PERSONS  
REPORTS.

FILTER BY  
REGION.



WHOA.

IT  
ACTUALLY  
WORKED?

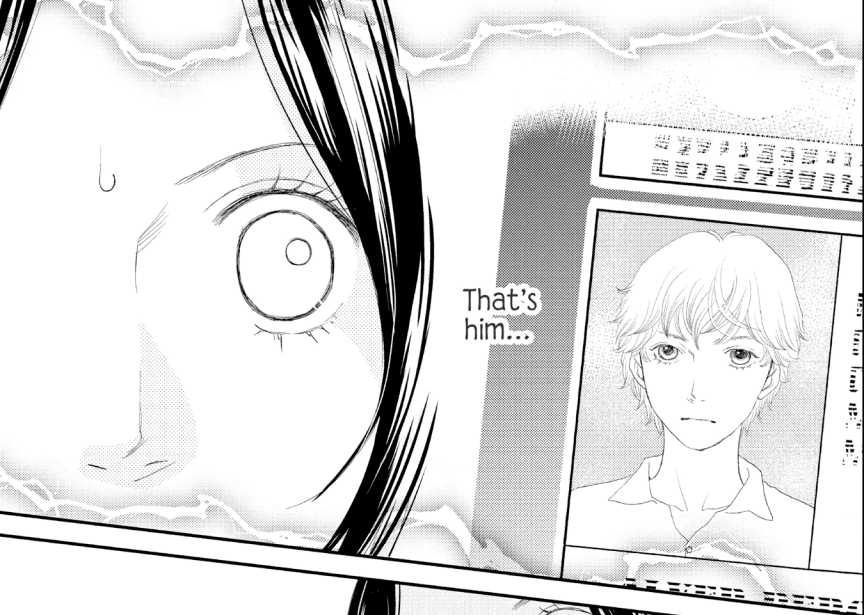
Report  
Date: Missing  
Missing From:  
Moreno Valley 6-6-07

NAME: [unclear]  
Age: [unclear]  
Missing From: [unclear]  
Missing From: [unclear]  
Moreno Valley 6-6-07

NAME: [unclear]  
Age: [unclear]  
Missing From: [unclear]  
Missing From: [unclear]  
Moreno Valley 6-6-07

NAME: [unclear]  
Age: [unclear]  
Missing From: [unclear]  
Missing From: [unclear]  
Moreno Valley 6-6-07





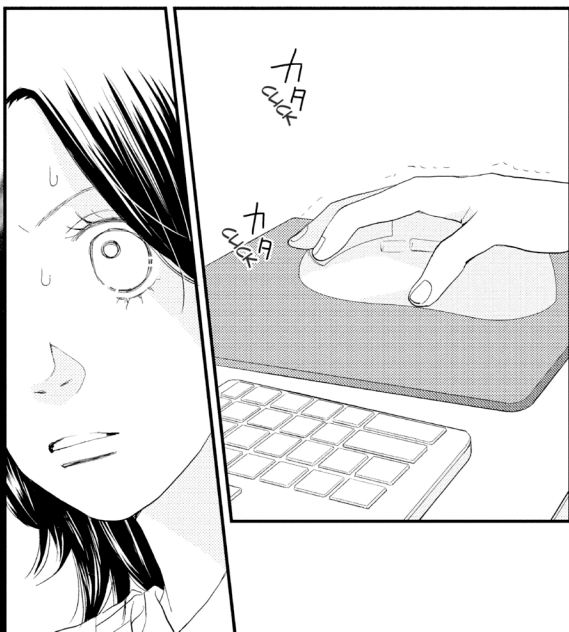
That's him...

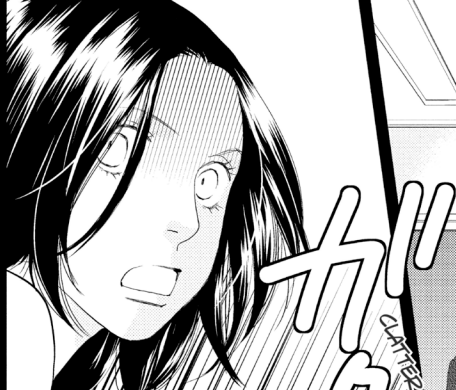
What?!



Did I...

... make  
some kind  
of mistake  
?





NO,  
NOBARA.

IT'S NOT A  
MISTAKE.



I'VE  
MANAGED TO  
REMEMBER  
MOST OF IT.

LUCIO...



EXCEPT  
FOR...

...MY  
NAME.



EVERYONE  
WAS SO  
EXCITED.

ONE  
DAY...

...THERE  
WAS A  
FESTIVAL.



...TO  
GATHER  
MUSH-  
ROOMS.

SO SHE  
SENT  
ME OUT  
INTO THE  
WOODS...

MY  
MOTHER  
...  
SHE WAS  
GOING  
TO COOK  
SOME-  
THING.



WHEN I  
CAME  
BACK...

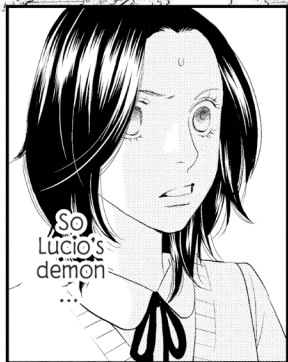
IT  
WAS AN  
INFERNO.

THE  
ENTIRE  
VILLAGE  
WAS UP IN  
FLAMES.

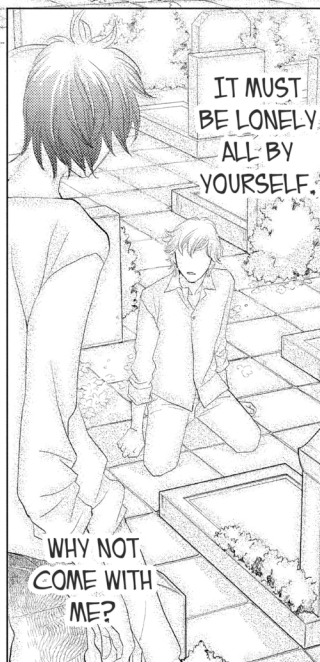


H...

HOW?



... was Lee.



WHEN I  
GAINED  
CONSCIOUS-  
NESS...



...I WAS  
JUST  
FLOATING IN  
DARKNESS.



... THANKS  
TO HIM...

... I  
BECAME  
A DEMON.

I PLANNED  
TO USE HER AS  
MY RETRIEVER  
UNTIL I DRAINED  
HER DRY.



ONE  
DAY...

... I HEARD  
A PLEA  
FROM AN  
OLD MAN.

AND I MADE  
A CONTRACT  
WITH A  
LITTLE GIRL  
ON THE  
BRINK OF  
DEATH.



WELL  
...

I REALLY  
ENJOYED  
THIS.



WHAT  
WAS I  
THINKING  
?



AFTER  
ALL  
...  
...I'D  
BEEN  
ALONE  
FOR A  
LONG  
TIME  
TOO.



WAIT!

W-





WHY...

...DOES IT  
HAVE TO  
BE LIKE  
THIS?

THIS  
DOESN'T  
NEED TO  
END!



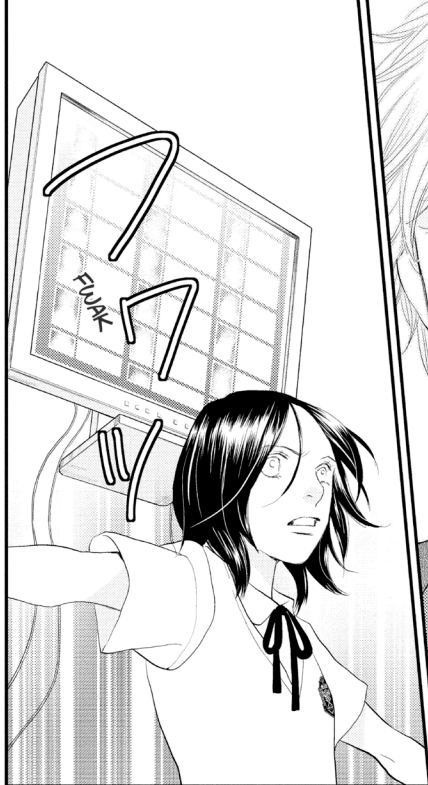
SHOW  
ME THE  
MONITOR.



I'M  
GOING  
TO  
LOOK.

YOU  
DON'T  
NEED TO  
LOOK!

NO!



IT'S THE  
ONLY WAY  
TO SET YOU  
FREE.



YOU'LL  
DISAPPEAR  
!

IDIOT!

YOU...





YOU  
DON'T  
HAVE...

...A  
BODY!

THERE'S  
NOTHING  
TO  
RETURN  
TO.

Ja.  
AH.



**Alver Bergman**  
1910~

Date Missing:  
Missing From:

Has been seen since birth, says yes!

Mitt namn är Alver.  
SO MY NAME IS ALVER.

**Alver Bergman**  
1910~



NO!

YOU CAN'T  
LEAVE ME!



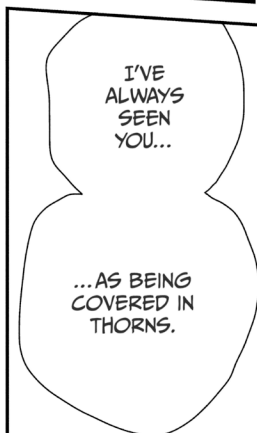
LU-

LUCIO!



ALVER...

...BERGMAN.



I'VE  
ALWAYS  
SEEN  
YOU...

...AS BEING  
COVERED IN  
THORNS.



NOBARA.



...YOU'LL  
BE ABLE TO  
REMOVE...

...YOUR  
CROWN...



PRICKING  
OTHERS  
...

...AND  
PRICKING  
YOURSELF.

I HOPE  
THAT ONE  
DAY...







Work  
hard,  
Nobara

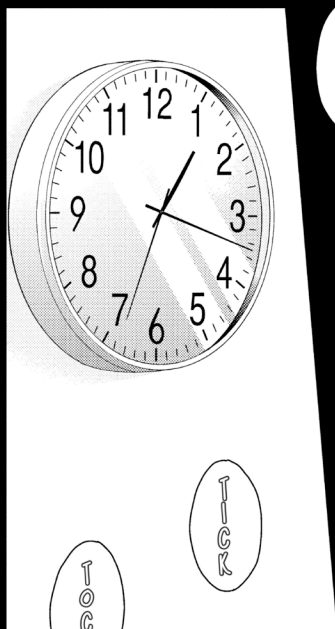
---

...for  
me.



Partner.







SHOW  
YOUR-  
SELF!

I KNOW  
YOU'RE  
THERE!

WHERE  
ARE  
YOU?



YOU  
LOOK SO  
HAGGARD.

WHAT'S  
WRONG?

I EXPECTED  
TO FIND A  
SMILE ON  
YOUR FACE.



NOW THAT  
YOUR DEMON  
IS GONE, YOU  
CAN RETURN  
TO NORMAL  
LIFE AGAIN.



THAT HE  
DIDN'T HAVE  
A BODY  
ANYMORE?



LUCIO...

DID HE  
KNOW?



DOING ALL  
THAT FOR A  
HUMAN!



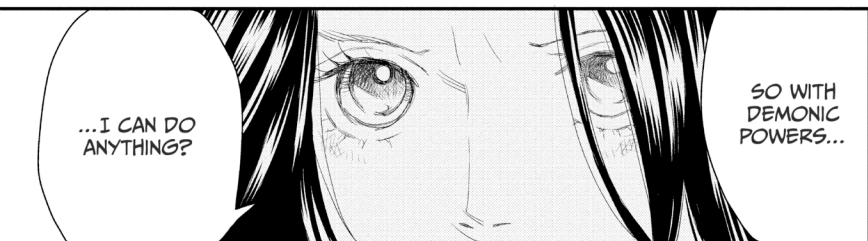
WHAT A  
FASCINATING  
FELLOW HE  
WAS!

くす  
HEH

くす  
HEH

OF  
COURSE  
HE  
KNEW.

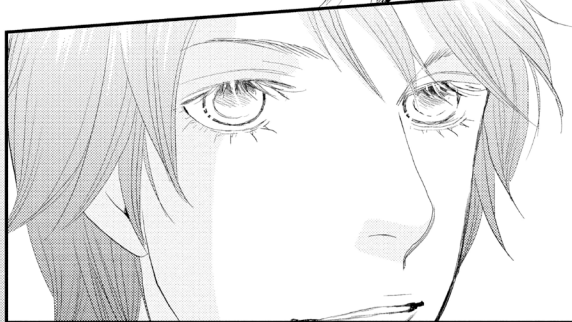
HE UNDER-  
STOOD HE  
WASN'T  
COMING  
BACK.





I'LL DO  
WHATEVER  
YOU WANT!

THEN BRING  
LUCIO BACK  
TO LIFE!



WELL?

GET ON  
WITH IT!

EVEN IF I  
HAVE TO  
BECOME A  
DEMON.





THERE  
ARE  
CERTAIN  
QUALIFI-  
CATIONS.

WHY  
NOT?

I'M  
AFRAID THAT  
WON'T BE  
POSSIBLE.

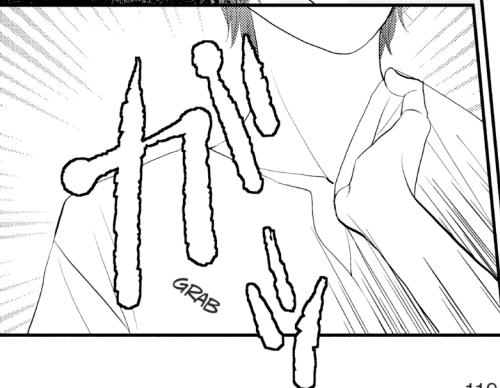


HEH  
31  
?

A  
DEMON?



NOT JUST  
ANYONE  
CAN BE  
A DEMON.



GRAB



H  
A  
H  
GRR!





WITH  
DEMONIC  
POWERS...

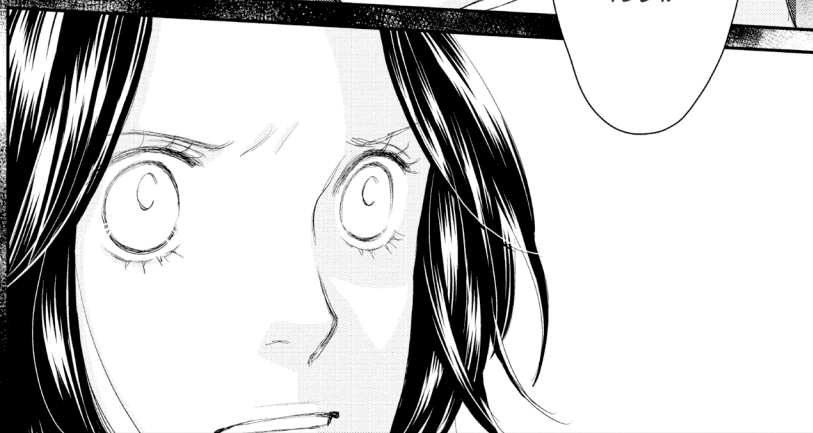
VERY  
WELL.

...CREATING  
A VESSEL  
FOR A SOUL  
IS A SIMPLE  
MATTER.

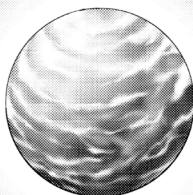


HOW  
ABOUT...

...I GIVE  
YOU A  
LITTLE  
TEST.



PRESENT  
ME WITH  
100 ORBS.



BETWEEN  
NOW...

...AND DAY-  
BREAK...

The most  
I've ever  
made in one  
day is ten.

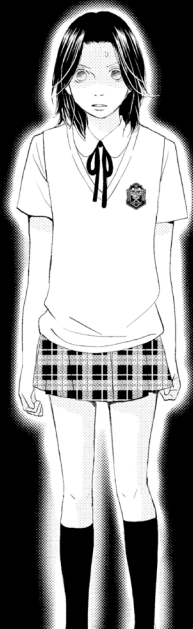
WHAT'S  
WRONG  
?

NOW,  
SHOULD  
YOU FAIL...

I...

I'LL DO  
IT!

...Lucio.




One...

...hundred...



wait for  
me...



Next  
time, I'll  
be the  
one...

...  
welcoming  
you home.





NOIR

# いはらの冠

CROWN  
OF  
THORNS

case  
II



PRESENT ME  
WITH 100  
ORBS BEFORE  
DAYBREAK.

はあ  
HUFF

... as a  
human.

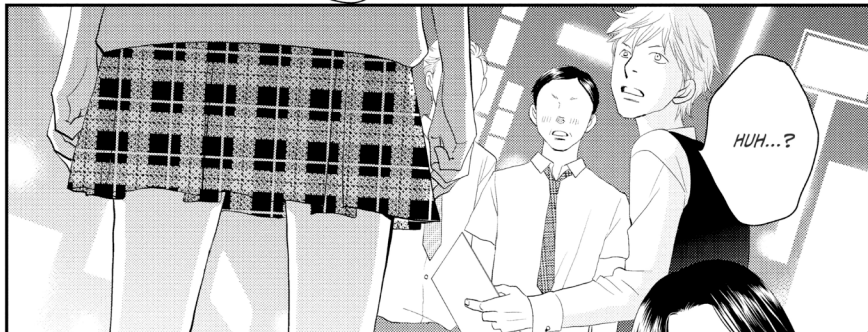
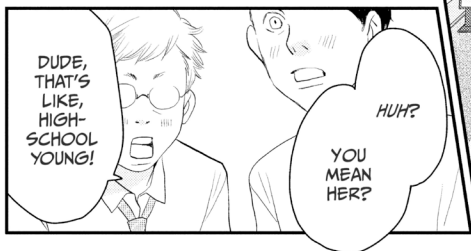
... to  
this  
world  
...

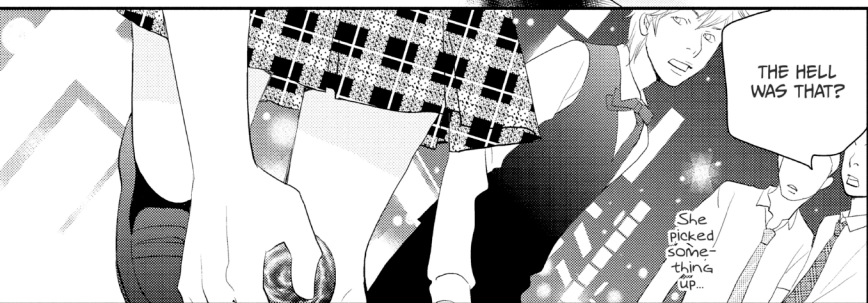
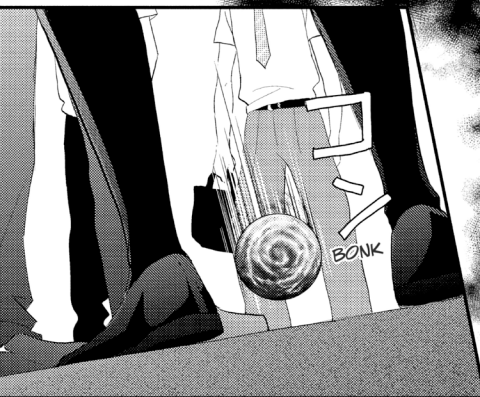
... Lucio  
will  
return  
...

If I  
do...

はあ  
HUFF

はあ  
HUFF





...and it's  
getting  
hard to  
find people.

It's past  
two in the  
morning...

I've never  
done  
anywhere  
near 100  
before.



And what  
he told me  
after...

Will I even  
be able to  
find enough  
negative  
emotions to  
filter?



BECAUSE YOUR  
SERVICE TO A  
DEMON IS THE  
REASON YOU  
EVEN HAVE THAT  
POWER.

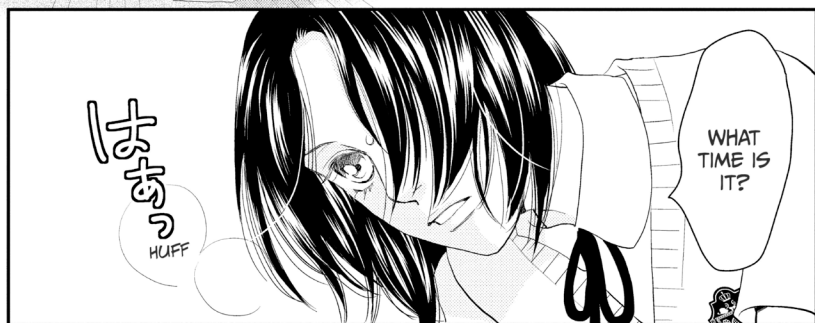
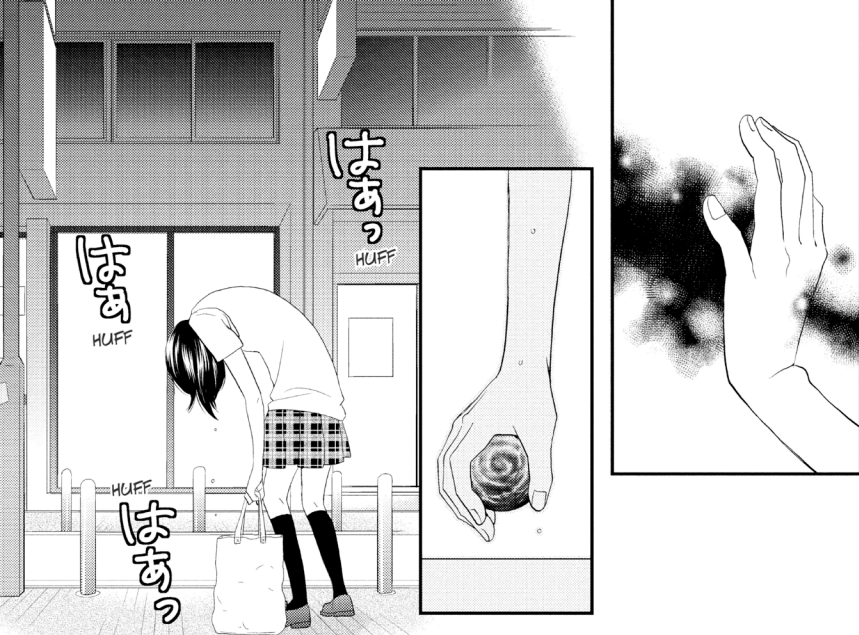
WHY BY  
DAYBREAK,  
YOU ASK?



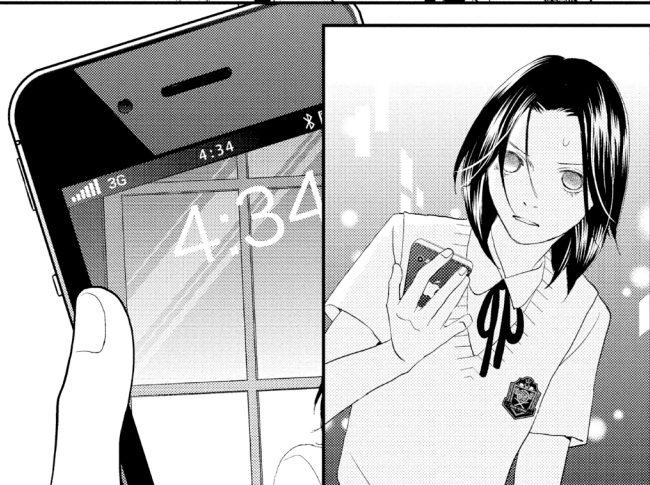
NOW THAT  
YOUR  
DEMON IS  
GONE...

...YOUR  
ABILITY TO  
FILTER DARK  
EMOTIONS INTO  
ORBS WON'T  
LAST TILL  
MORNING.





DO YOU  
HAVE A CELL  
PHONE,  
NOBARA?

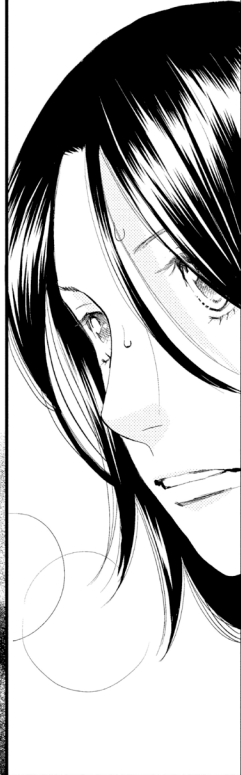






LUCIO...

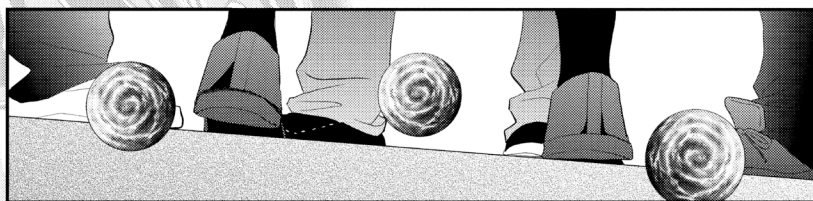
HE...  
VANISHED.



But I won't  
accept  
that he's  
gone.







... through  
your body  
to make  
orbs...

That's  
right...

Filtering  
negative  
emotions...

That's  
what Lucio  
disappeared  
to protect  
me from.

That's  
what  
turned  
Henmi  
into a  
demon.





BLOOD'S  
GUSHING  
OUT OF HER  
NOSE.



PUP  
✖ 0  
9  
○  
○

DAMN,  
DUDE.



WHOA!



WHAT THE  
HELL?

GIVE  
IT UP. I  
DON'T  
WANNA  
BE A  
PART OF  
WHERE  
THIS IS  
GOING.

THAT  
GIRL  
IS  
TROU-  
BLE.



NINETY-  
SEVEN...

NINETY-  
EIGHT...



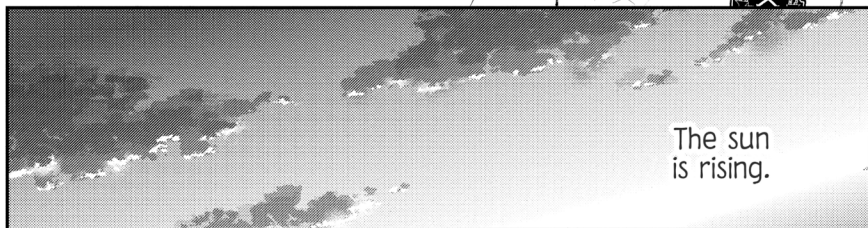


JUST...

...ONE  
MORE...

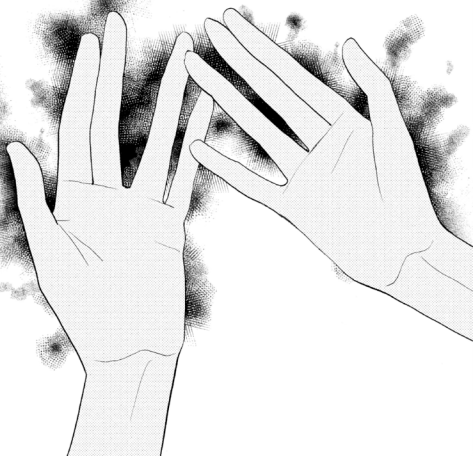


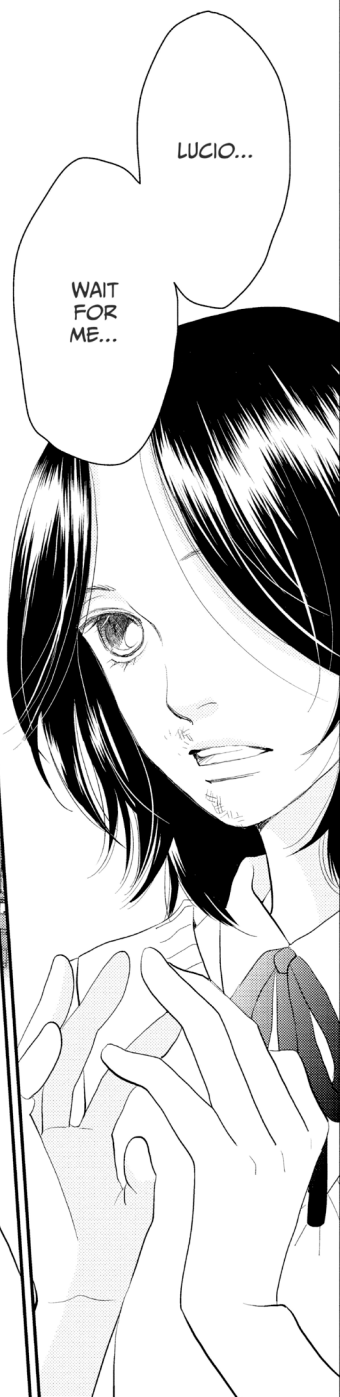
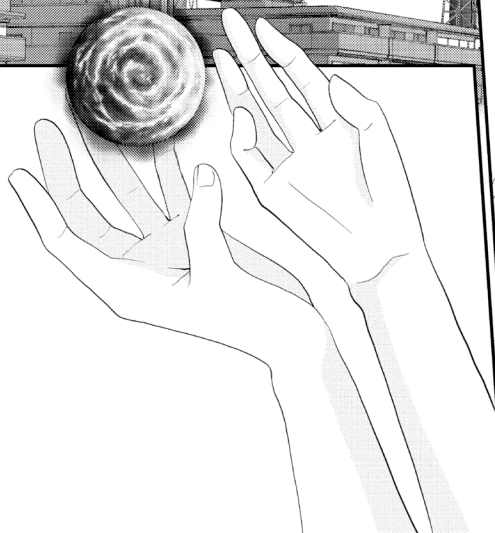
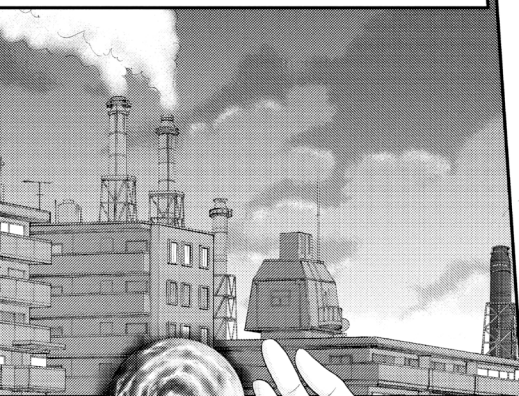
NINETY-  
NINE...



The sun  
is rising.

Some  
of the  
filtered  
smoke's  
still inside  
me...



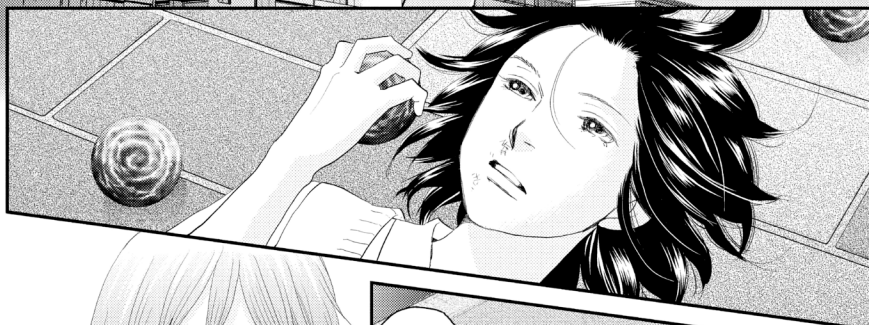




... ONE  
HUNDRED.

...  
anyone  
but  
myself  
...

I never  
thought  
I'd care  
about...



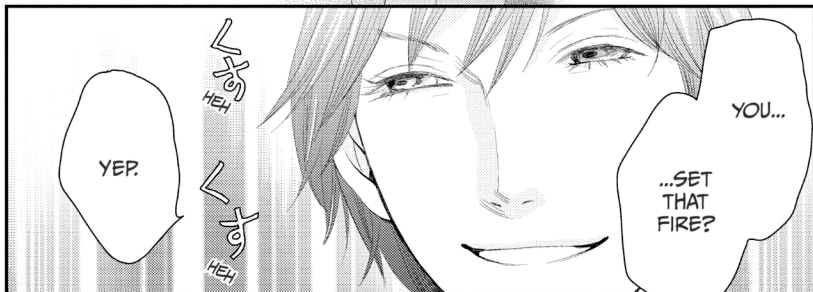
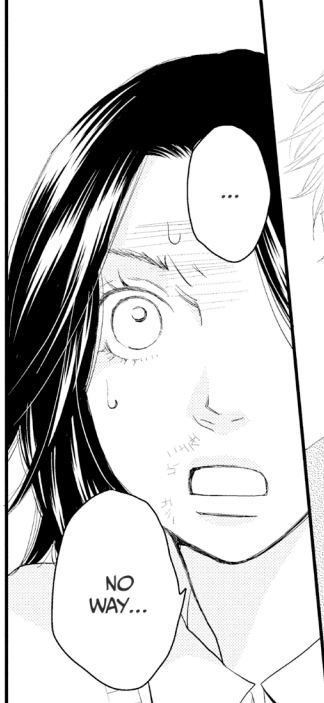
ONE  
HUNDRED  
ORBS...

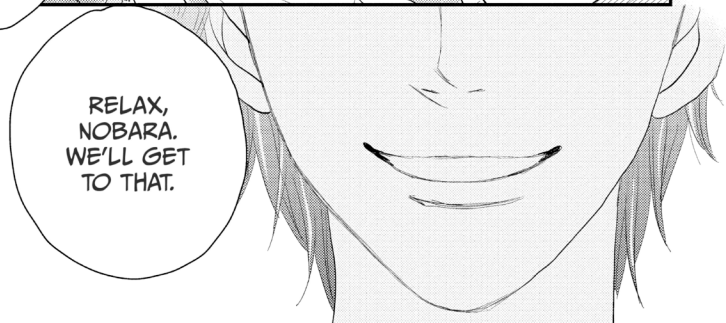
...  
EXACTLY.



WELL  
DONE.









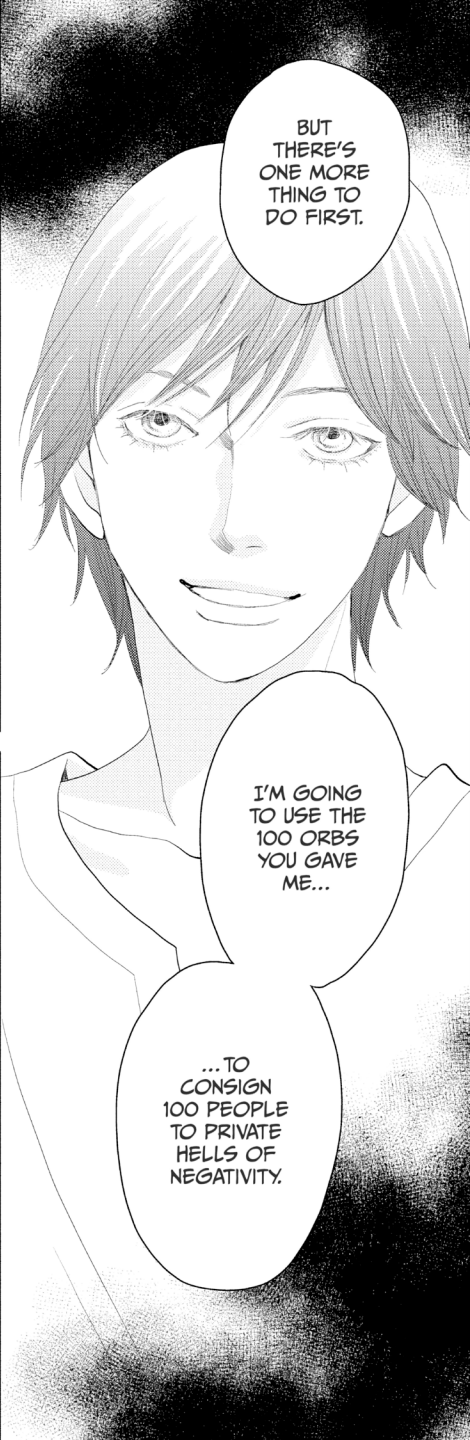


BUT  
THERE'S  
ONE MORE  
THING TO  
DO FIRST.



...I'LL  
RESUR-  
RECT  
HIM FOR  
YOU.

AND  
ONCE  
THAT'S  
DONE...



I'M GOING  
TO USE THE  
100 ORBS  
YOU GAVE  
ME...

...TO  
CONSIGN  
100 PEOPLE  
TO PRIVATE  
HELLS OF  
NEGATIVITY.



...  
YOU'RE  
LYING...



HEH

LYING?

WHEN  
HAVE I  
EVER LIED  
TO YOU?



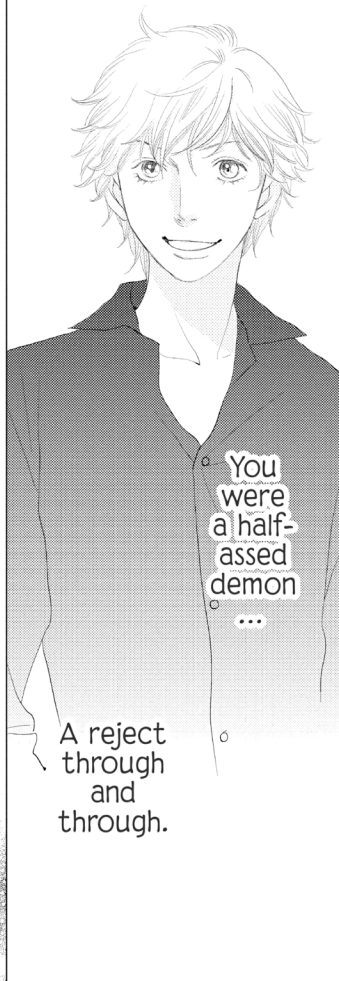
... is  
enjoying  
this.

NEED I  
REMINDE  
YOU...

...WHO  
DIDN'T STAY  
TO HEAR THE  
FULL TERMS  
OF OUR  
DEAL?

This  
ass-  
hole  
...

You were  
a demon,  
but you  
were  
nothing  
like him.



You  
were  
a half-  
assed  
demon  
...

A reject  
through  
and  
through.

Lucio...



He's  
loving  
this.





I'M GOING  
TO LOOK.

IT'S THE  
ONLY WAY  
TO SET YOU  
FREE.

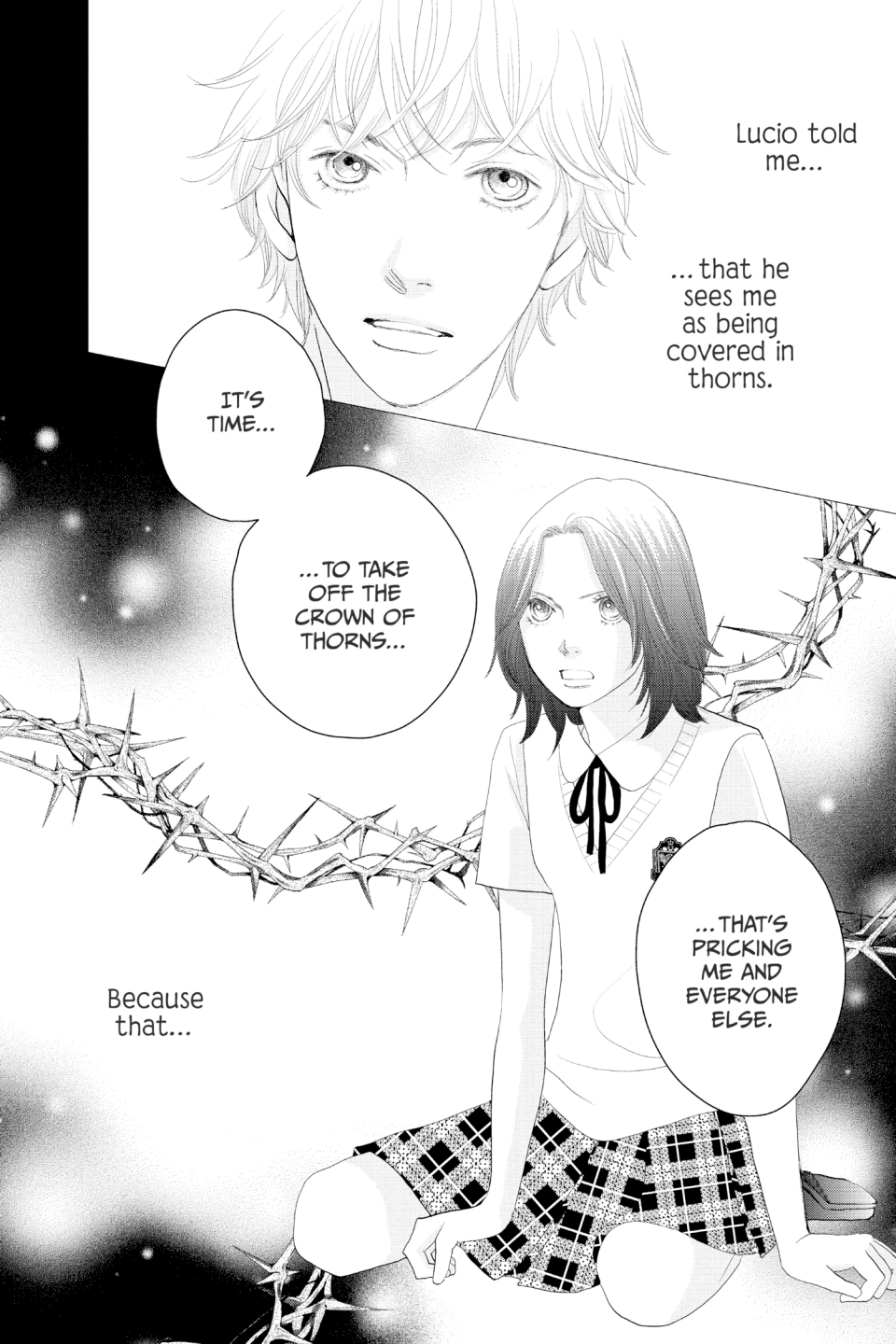


WHAT WAS I  
THINKING?



YOU NO  
LONGER  
WANT ME  
TO GRANT  
YOUR  
WISH?

WHAT'S  
WRONG?



Lucio told  
me...

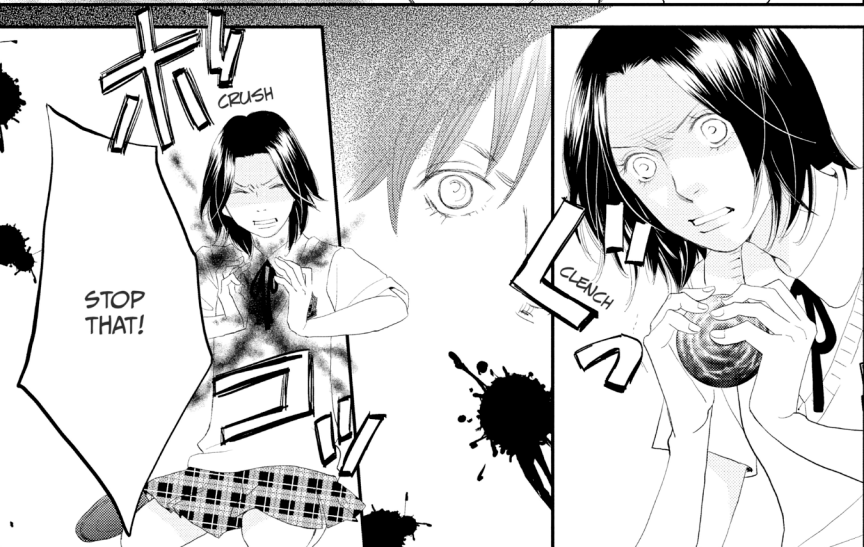
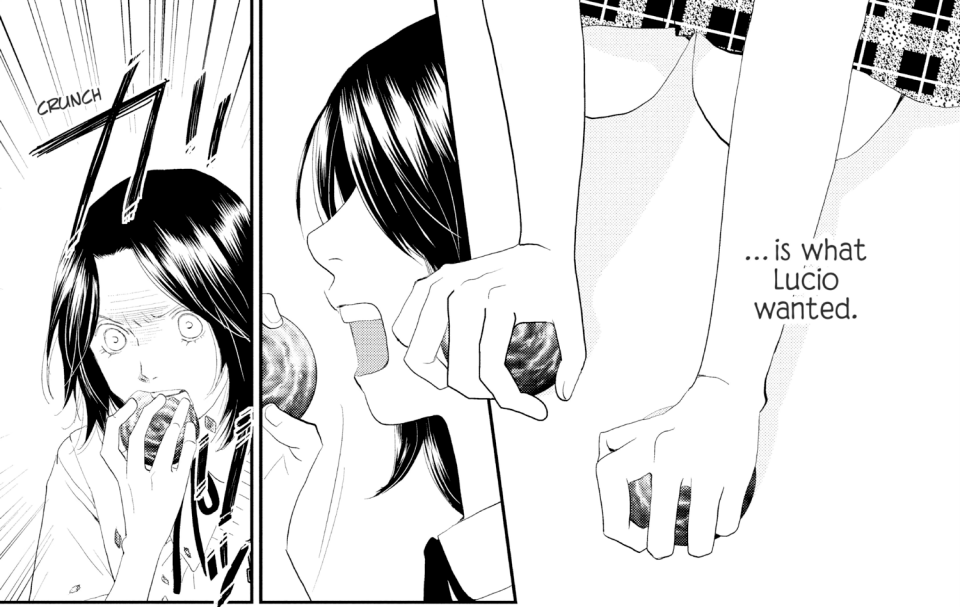
... that he  
sees me  
as being  
covered in  
thorns.

IT'S  
TIME...

...TO TAKE  
OFF THE  
CROWN OF  
THORNS...

Because  
that...

... THAT'S  
PRICKING  
ME AND  
EVERYONE  
ELSE.







THESE  
ORBS  
AREN'T  
GOING  
TO HURT  
ANYONE.

I'M  
TAKING  
THEM ALL  
BACK.



STOP.



I  
ASSURE  
YOU, IT  
WON'T!

DOING  
THIS  
WON'T  
MAKE YOU  
INTO A  
DEMON!

YOU'RE  
GOING  
TO MAKE  
YOURSELF  
SICK.

THERE'S  
NO POINT  
SACRIFICING  
YOURSELF!



STOP!

I'M  
GOING TO  
SAVE 100  
PEOPLE.

AND  
IT'S ALL  
THANKS  
TO YOU.

AS  
A DEMON,  
HOW MUCH  
DOES THIS  
GOOD DEED  
DISGUST  
YOU?

CRUSH

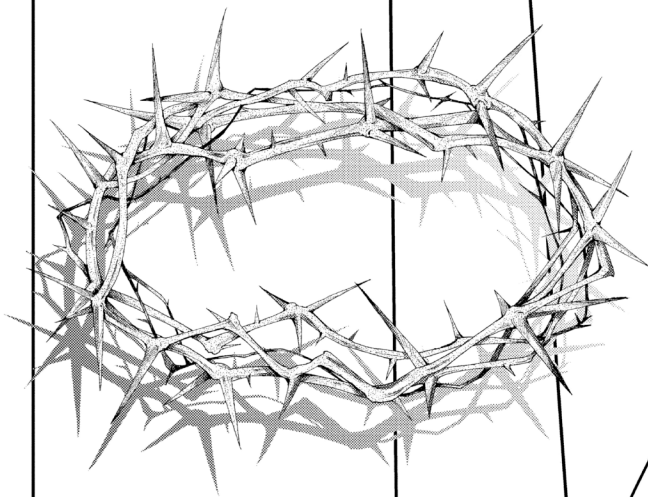
S-

CRUSH

CRUSH

Never...

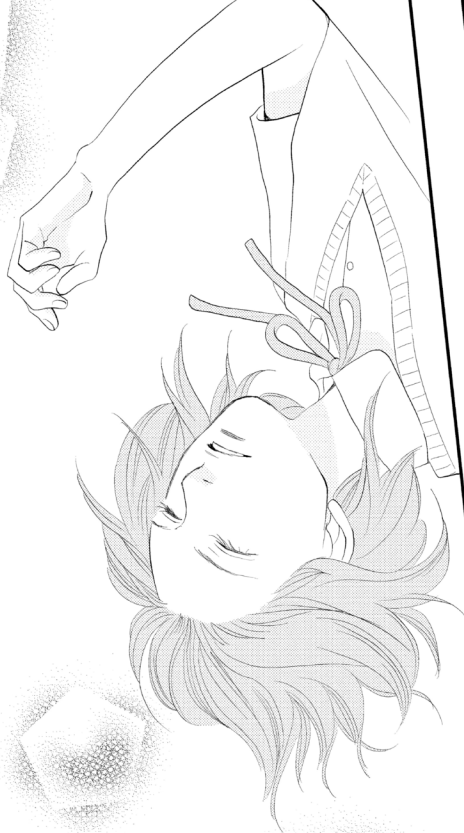
I HOPE  
YOU NEVER  
FORGET  
THIS.



I will never  
wear my  
crown of  
thorns  
again.



**STOP!**



Later  
they  
told  
me...

I absorbed  
all 100 orbs  
into myself.

And fell  
into a  
long  
sleep.



... that  
next  
to my  
body...



... they  
found a  
barely  
used cell  
phone...

... with a  
picture of  
a smiling  
Lucio...

... that wasn't  
supposed  
to exist  
anymore.

# いばらの 冠

CROWN  
OF  
THORNS

Last  
case







CAN YOU  
HEAR  
ME?

MS.  
NOBARA  
FUKAMI!

MS.  
FUKAMI.

SHE'S  
AWAKE?



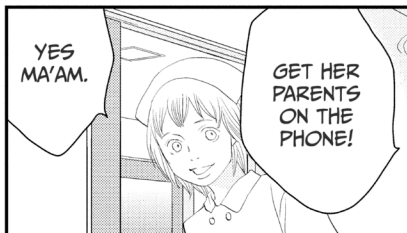
"A  
LONG  
TIME"  
...?

THANK  
HEAVENS  
YOU'RE  
OKAY.

YOU'VE BEEN  
UNCONCIOUS  
FOR A LONG  
TIME.

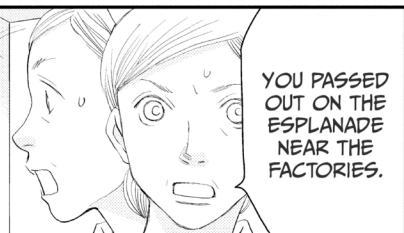


WHERE  
...

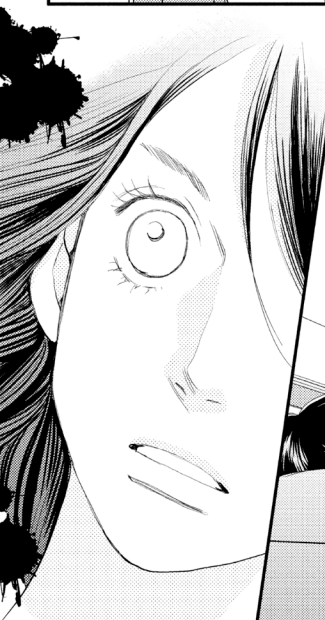


YES  
MA'AM.

GET HER  
PARENTS  
ON THE  
PHONE!



YOU PASSED  
OUT ON THE  
ESPLANADE  
NEAR THE  
FACORIES.



NEARLY  
THREE  
MONTHS.



HOW  
LONG  
...IS A  
"LONG  
TIME"?



YOU'RE STILL WEAK. YOU NEED TO LIE DOWN AND REST.

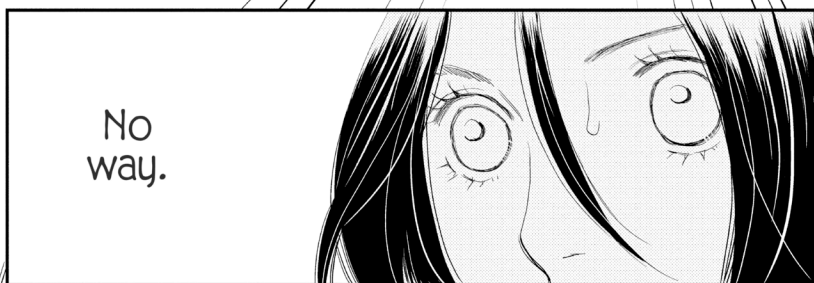


SHUP

TH-

DON'T MAKE ANY ABRUPT MOVEMENTS!

TH-  
THREE MONTHS?!



No way.

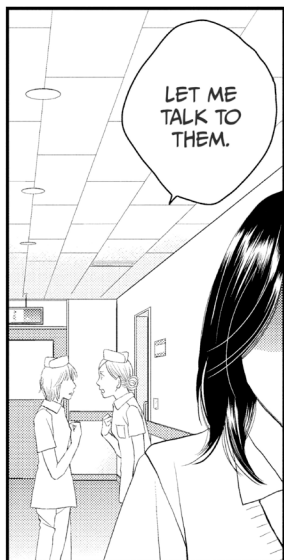


MA'AM?  
CAN I HAVE  
A WORD?



What happened?  
Has Lucio come back?

It's been three months?



LET ME  
TALK TO  
THEM.



TOTTEN  
TOTTEN

SOME PARENTS  
THEY ARE...

THAT POOR  
THING.



...THEY  
SAID  
THEY  
CAN'T  
LEAVE  
OSAKA  
RIGHT  
NOW

I SPOKE  
TO HER  
FAMILY,  
BUT...

WHAT?  
EVEN AFTER  
THEY ONLY  
BOTHERED  
TO VISIT HER  
ONCE?



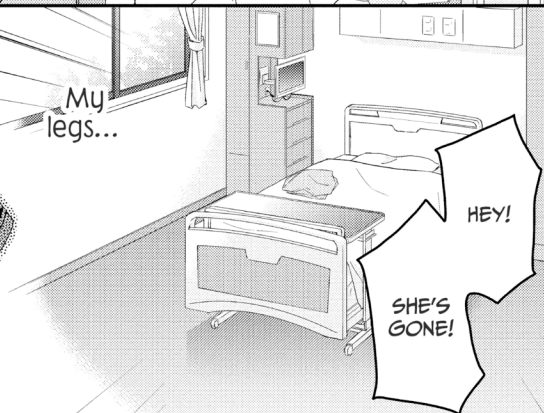
I'VE  
GOT  
GOOD  
NEWS—

MS.  
FUKAMI  
...



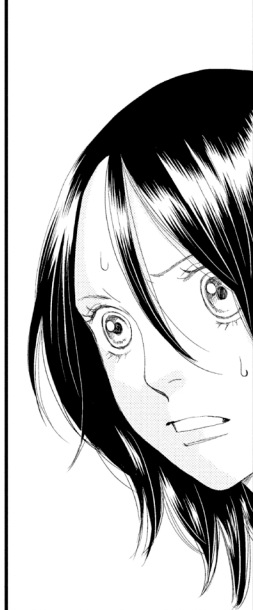
My  
legs...

... feel like  
rubber  
...



HEY!

SHE'S  
GONE!



I need  
to  
hurry...

I have to  
know for  
sure...



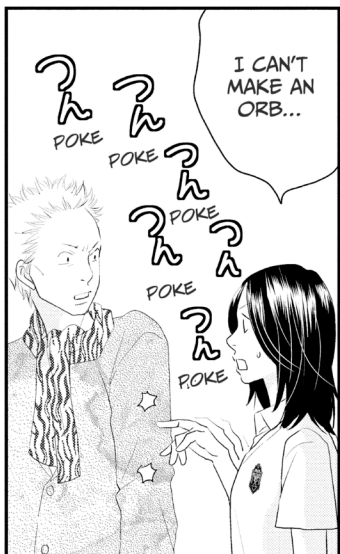
How  
could  
I just  
sleep  
for so  
long?

はあ  
あ  
HUFF



DAMN IT.  
SCREW  
IT ALL...

Mutter  
Mutter  
ツィッ



I CAN'T  
MAKE AN  
ORB...

っん  
POKE  
っん  
POKE  
っん  
POKE  
っん  
POKE  
っん  
POKE  
っん  
POKE  
っん  
POKE  
っん  
POKE



っん  
TMP









...

LUCIO

...

I'M HOME.



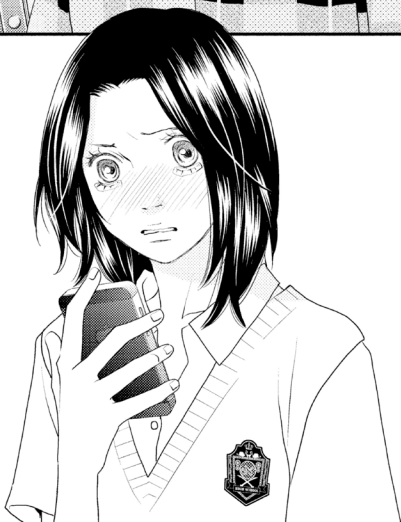
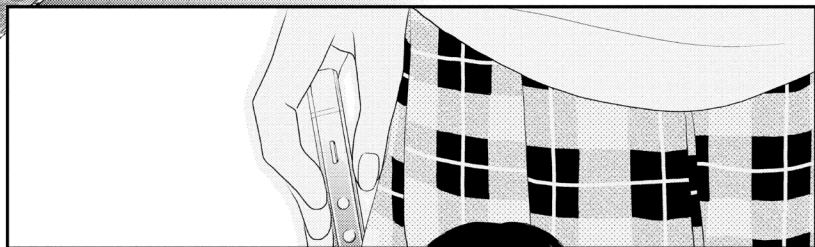
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO SAY, "I'M HOME."

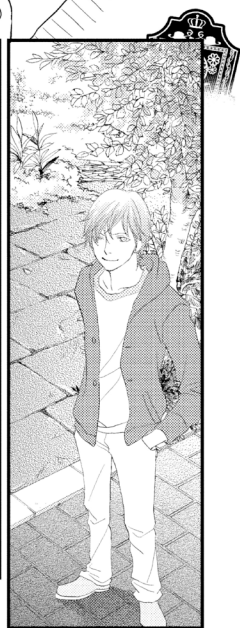
AND I'LL REPLY, "WELCOME BACK."



CALM DOWN!

CAN'T YOU OPEN THE DOOR GENTLY WHEN YOU COME HOME?







WE HAD  
A DEAL.

A  
DEAL...

...THAT  
YOU DIDN'T  
MEET YOUR  
END OF.



WHO?

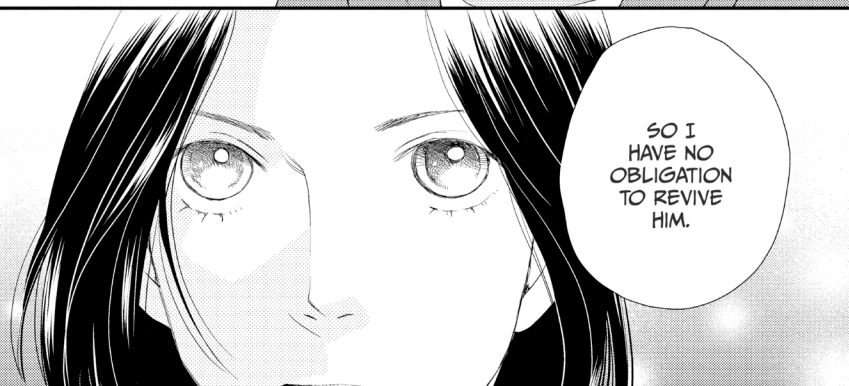


WHERE  
IS HE?

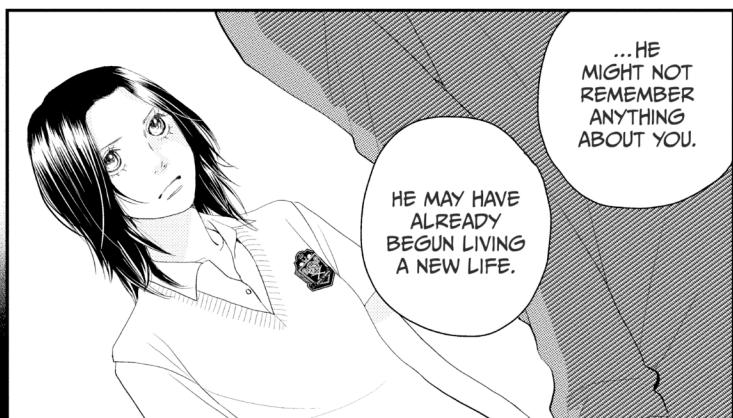
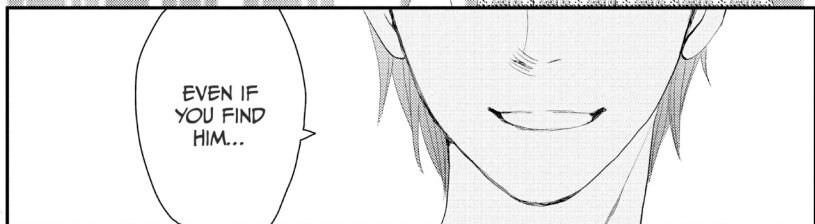


BUT THAT  
DIDN'T  
HAPPEN,  
DID IT?

I TOLD  
YOU THAT I  
WOULD SEND  
100 PEOPLE  
TO THEIR  
PRIVATE  
HELLS.



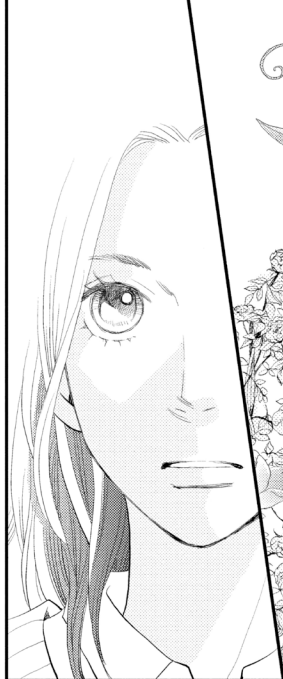
SO I  
HAVE NO  
OBLIGATION  
TO REVIVE  
HIM.






He's  
not...

...  
wrong.

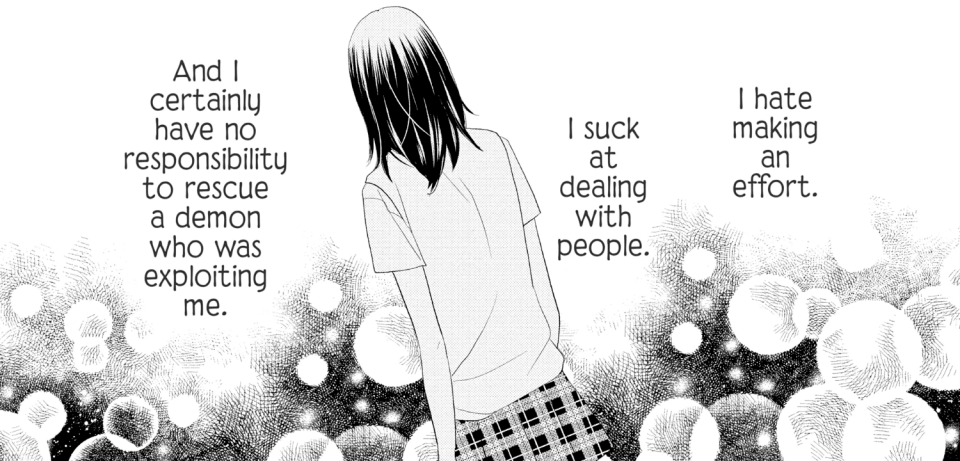


SHOULDN'T  
YOU DO THE  
SAME?

START LIVING  
A NORMAL  
LIFE AS IF  
NONE OF  
THIS EVER  
HAPPENED?



The old  
me would  
have done  
just that.



And I  
certainly  
have no  
responsibility  
to rescue  
a demon  
who was  
exploiting  
me.

I suck  
at  
dealing  
with  
people.

I hate  
making  
an  
effort.



I just  
want  
to look  
into the  
eyes...

WHAT  
CAN I  
SAY?

I REALLY  
WANT TO  
SEE HIM.

It's  
okay.

...of my  
slightly  
virtuous  
demon.

Even if  
Lucio has  
forgotten  
all this...



...ARE SUCH  
RIDICULOUS  
CREATURES.

I'VE NEVER  
BEEN MORE  
DISGUSTED.



YOU  
HUMANS  
...

<  
>  
HEH



...I still  
remember  
everything.



Without  
Lucio...

... I'm  
already  
starting to  
wonder if it  
was all just  
a dream.

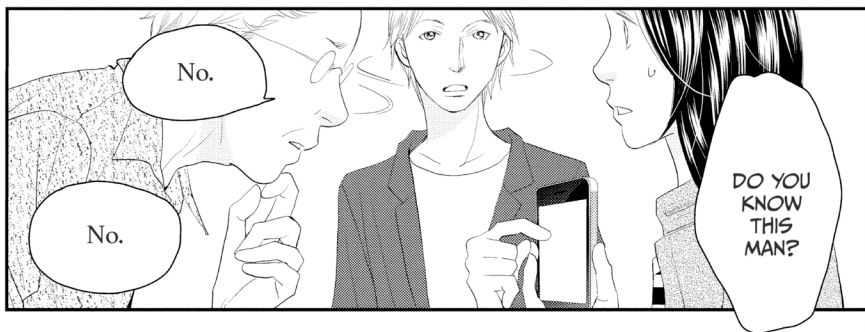
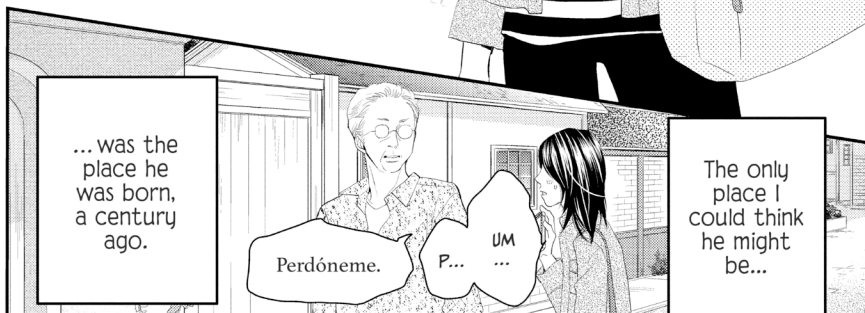


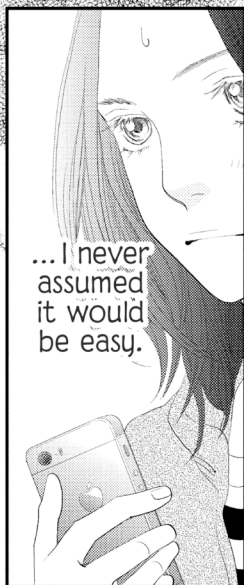
But...

... in my  
heart...

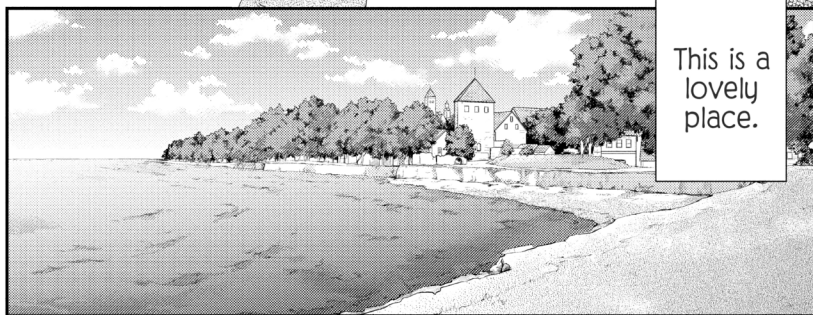
... that  
warm  
feeling  
still  
remains.

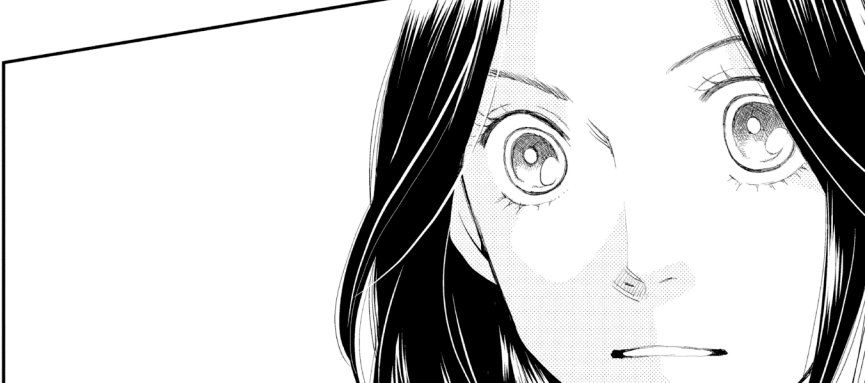
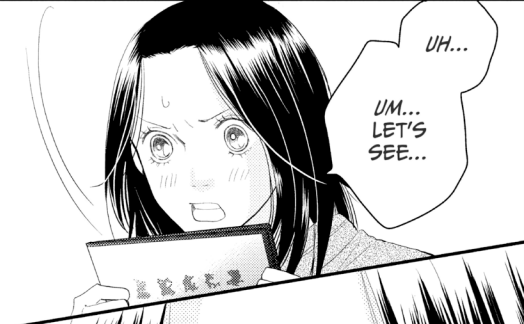
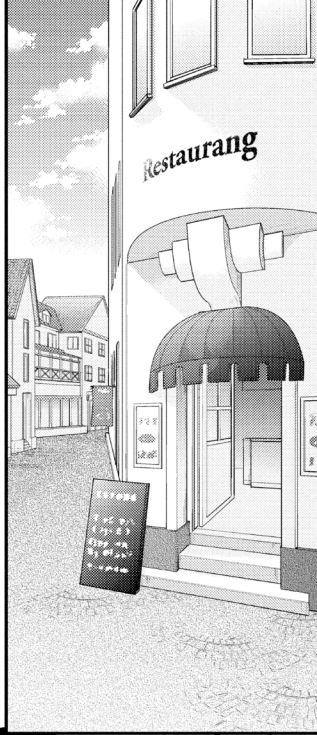
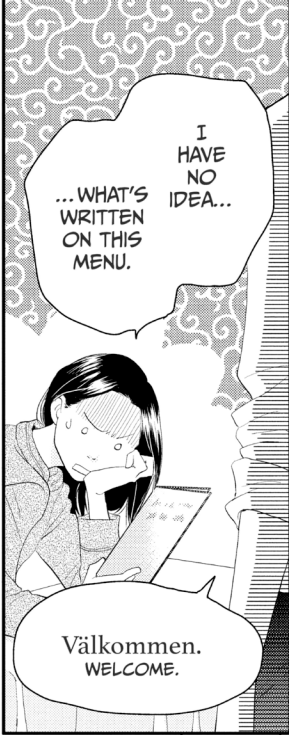






Well  
...



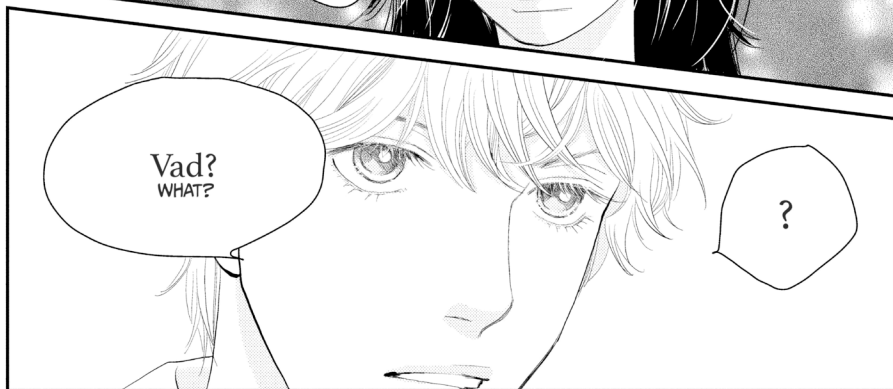








IT'S  
YOU...

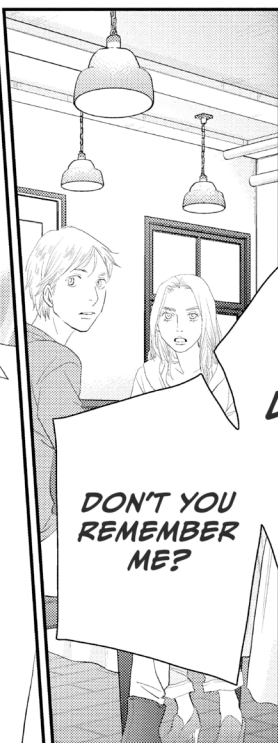


Vad?  
WHAT?

?



Är du okay?  
ARE YOU OKAY?



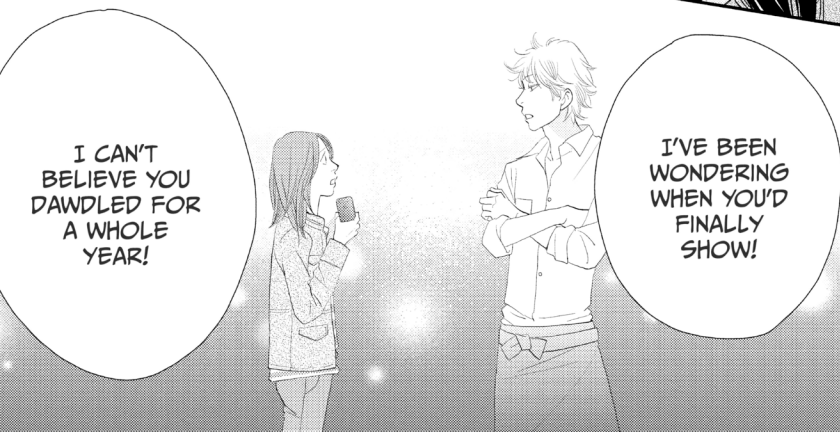
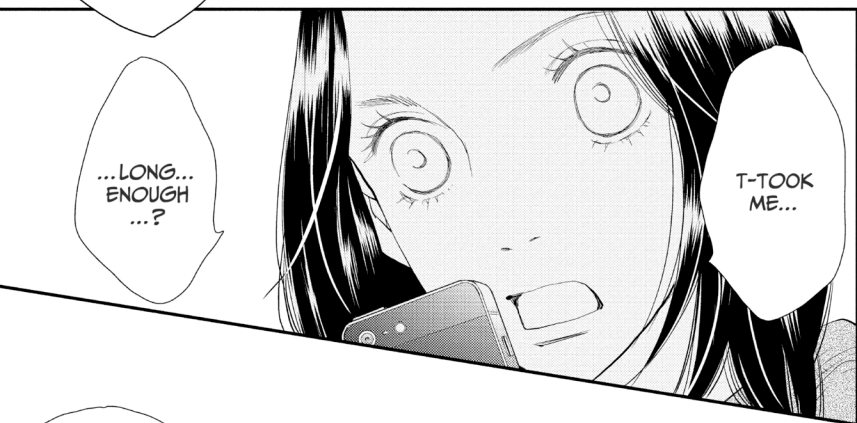
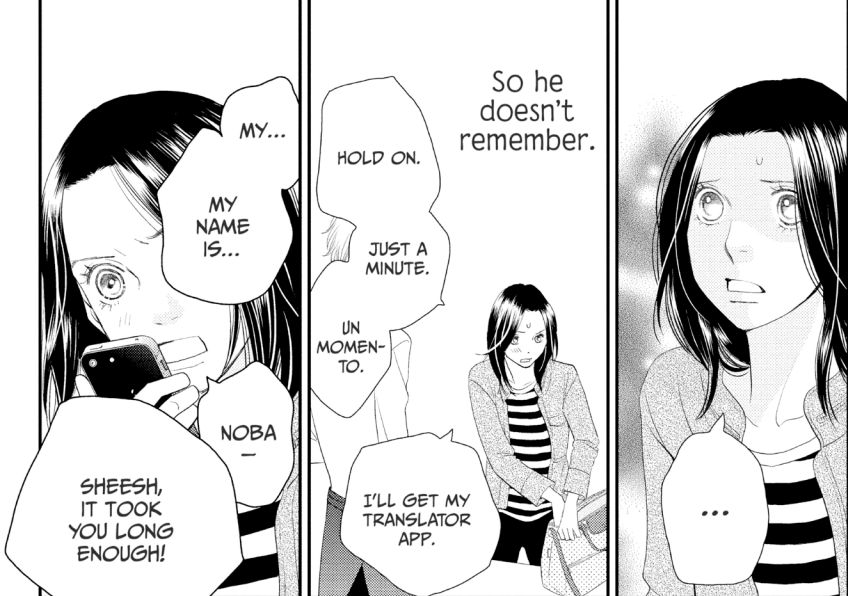
**DON'T YOU  
REMEMBER  
ME?**

**LUCIO  
!**



No  
way.

It's  
really  
you.





I CAN'T  
LEAVE HERE  
WITHOUT A  
PASSPORT...

I DON'T  
HAVE ANY  
MONEY, I  
GET HUNGRY  
ALL THE  
TIME...

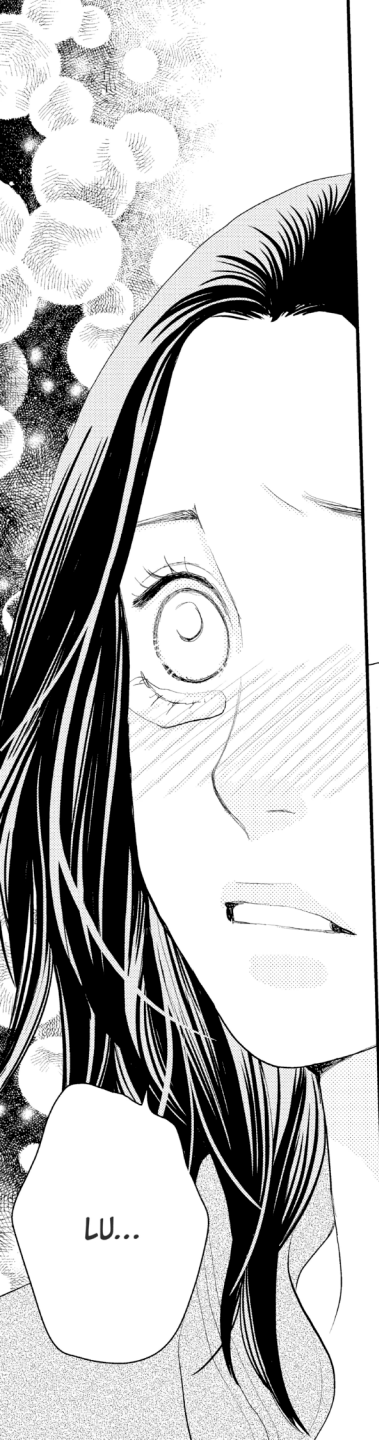
I  
CAN'T FLY  
ANYMORE  
...

I  
CAN'T  
STOP  
TIME...



BEING  
HUMAN...

...IS A  
TOTAL  
PAIN  
IN THE  
ASS!



LU...



I MEAN,  
RIGHT?



JUST CALL  
ME LUCIO.



LUCI-

ER,  
NO...

SNIFF

くすくす

WHAT  
WAS IT?  
ALAN...



ALVIN  
...?

ARVIN  
...?

...

You...  
forgot  
...



It's a day  
like every  
day, full of  
wishes.



But be  
careful

...

Make  
sure you  
don't  
wish too  
hard.

*I WISH  
MY DOG  
WOULD  
COME  
HOME.*

*I WANT  
TO COME  
IN FIRST IN  
THAT RACE!*

*I  
WISH SHE  
LOVED ME  
BACK.*

*BE A  
WINNER,  
LOTTERY  
TICKET!*

*THERE  
HAS TO BE  
SOMETHING  
BETTER  
THAN THIS.*

*I WANT  
TO GET  
MARRIED.*

*IF ONLY  
I WAS  
PRETTIER  
...*

*I NEED  
A  
BETTER  
JOB.*

*I WISH  
I DIDN'T  
HAVE TO  
GO TO  
SCHOOL.*

*I HOPE  
GRANDPA  
GETS  
BETTER.*

*I WISH HE'D  
DUMP HER  
ALREADY.*


*I NEED  
TO  
PASS  
THAT  
TEST.*

*IF ONLY I  
COULD DO  
SOMETHING  
ABOUT MY  
BOSS.*

*I  
GOTTA  
LOSE  
WEIGHT  
!*

*I WISH  
I WAS  
BETTER  
AT THE  
PIANO.*





Because  
somewhere,  
a demon  
might be  
listening.

The End

**BONUS  
MANGA**

# WHEN A HERO CALLS

I'M A  
HERO.

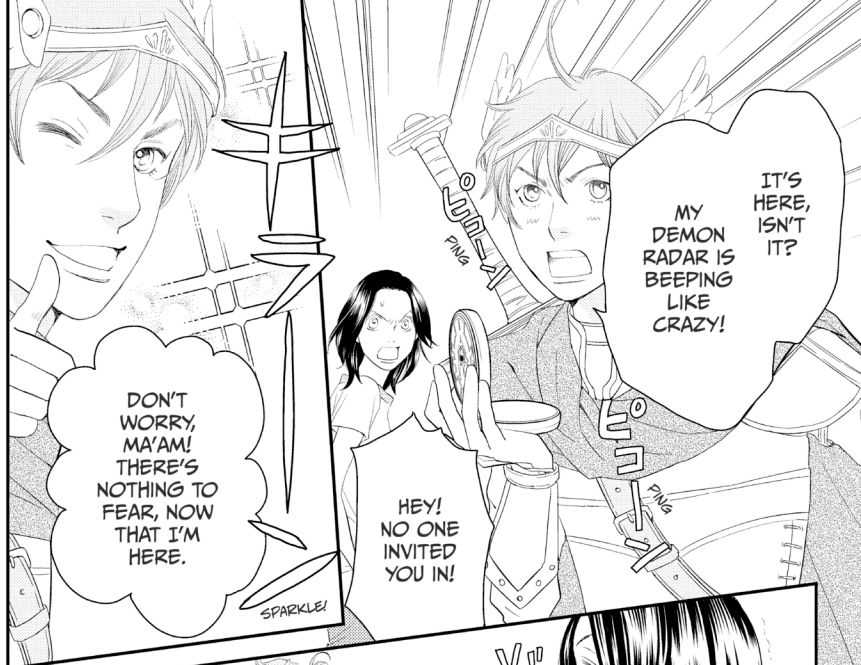
AND I'VE  
HEARD  
THERE'S A  
DEMON IN  
THE AREA.

SO I'VE  
COME TO  
VANQUISH  
IT!

OH!

HELLO  
THERE!

WHAT  
?













IT'S  
AN ANCIENT  
POTION THAT  
WILL FORCE  
YOU TO  
REVEAL YOUR  
TRUE FORM.

HEH  
HEH  
HEH

IT HAS BEEN  
FERMENTING  
FOR  
MILLENNIA,  
PASSED DOWN  
FROM HERO  
TO HERO.



WHAT THE  
HELL DID  
YOU JUST  
SPLASH ON  
ME?

IT  
REEKS!



ARE YOU  
KIDDING ME  
WITH THIS  
CRAP?

MILLENNIA...?!  
NO WONDER  
IT STINKS!

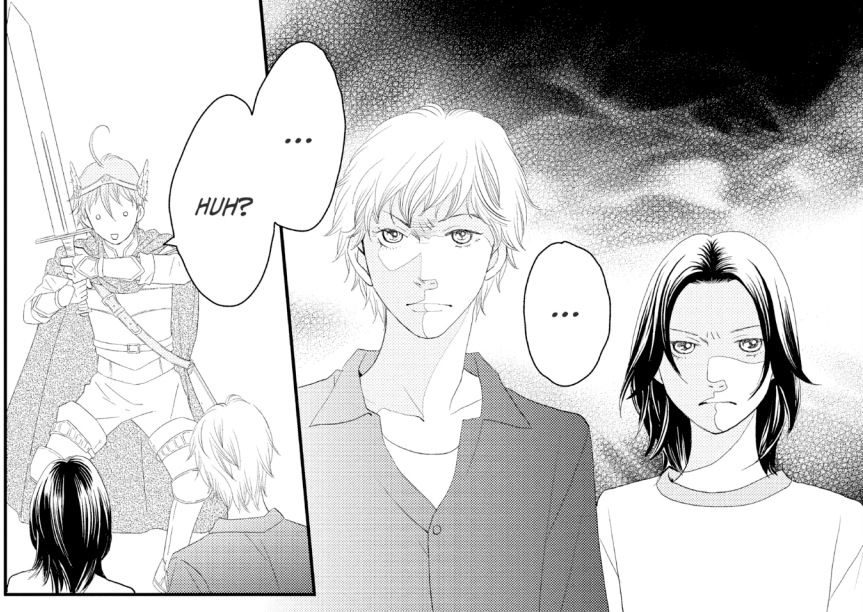


SATAN  
!

FACE  
ME—

NOW!

SHOW  
YOUR-  
SELF!



THE END

# © AFTERWORD ©

That other shoujo manga had zombies covered...

I've wanted to write a demon manga for a long time now.

A demon should have horns and bat-like wings and fangs and a deep, gravelly voice...

Brain-storming

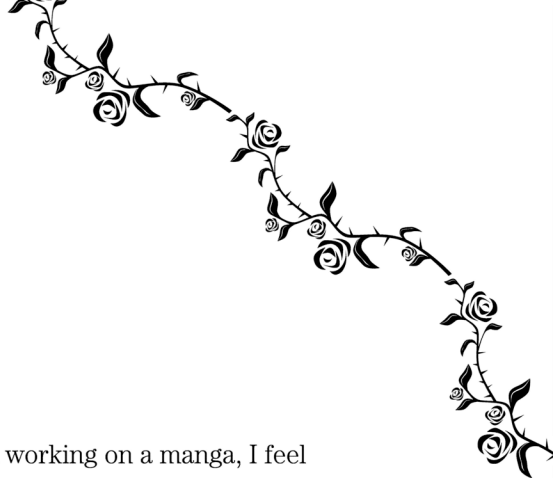
I've loved zombie- and demon-themed horror movies since I was a child.

**BWAHAHAHAHA!  
I'M A DEMON  
AND I OWN  
THY SOUL!**

Yikes. She almost made me into that...!

**THAT'S  
AWFUL!**

**THANKS FOR READING  
UNTIL THE END!  
— KAMIO**



Whenever I'm working on a manga, I feel an intense urge to travel. And then when I finish...for some reason I never end up going anywhere. Maybe that's why so many of my characters go on trips—they're acting as proxies for their homebody creator?

## YOKO KAMIO

Yoko Kamio made her manga debut in 1986 with *HATACHINO MAMADE MATTEIRU* (Waiting Until 20). Her works since include *SUKI SUKI DAISUKI* (I Really, Really Like You), and *MARY-SAN NO HITSUJI* (Mary's Lamb).

Following its release, *HANA YORI DANGO* (Boys Over Flowers) broke sales records by becoming the first shojo manga series to sell over 61 million copies in Japan, making the series the best-selling shojo manga in Japan. The series went on to win the 1996 Shogakukan Comic Award in the Girls Preferred Division.

# Crown of Thorns

VOLUME 2  
SHOJO BEAT EDITION

STORY AND ART BY  
**Yoko Kamio**

ENGLISH TRANSLATION & ADAPTATION **Casey Loe**

TOUCH-UP ART & LETTERING **Evan Waldinger**

DESIGN **Shawn Carrico**

EDITOR **Pancha Diaz**

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Published by  
VIZ Media, LLC  
P.O. Box 77010  
San Francisco, CA 94107

